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ABSTRACT

This guide describes a design for building-level school improvement in the state of Wisconsin. Summarized is effective-schools research that is designed to encourage schools and districts to become familiar with and engage in the improvement process. The first section describes what a school district needs to consider when beginning the school improvement process, followed by a discussion on needs assessment and goal setting. A three-step design for building-level school improvement is described in the second section. This design includes an initiation process, a delivery model, and a continuation process. Section 3 contains descriptions of the effectiveness elements along with worksheets to help in the planning process. Section 4 outlines several successful projects and gives 24 references. Appended are: (1) a 7-page summary of Wisconsin's statutes and administrative rules that govern school district standards; (2) a school improvement needs-assessment survey; (3) a 12-page school improvement program profile; and (4) a 2-page list of resource highlights for effective schools. (SI)

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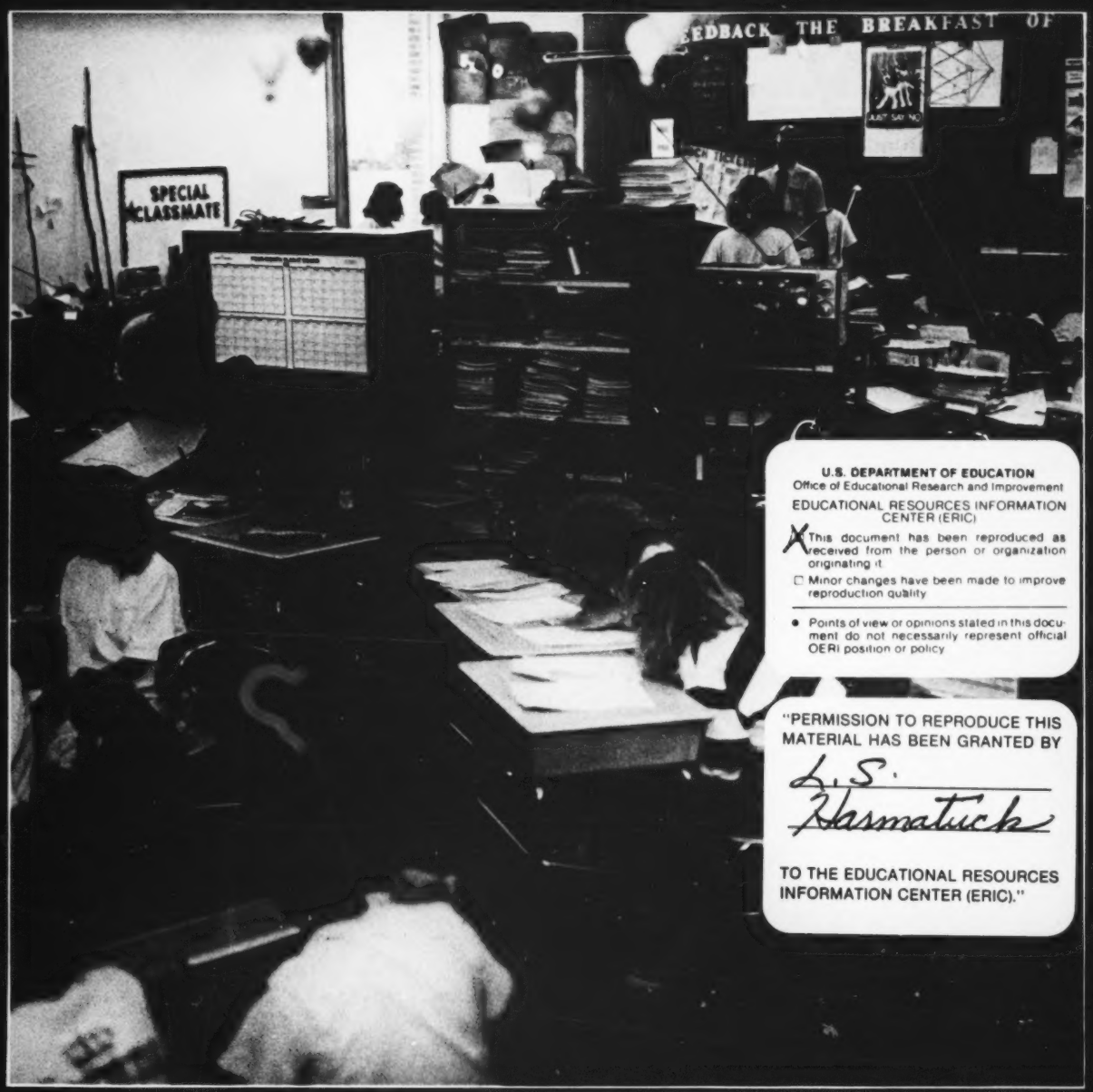

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction / Herbert J. Grover, State Superintendent

School Improvement:

A Resource and Planning Guide

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Foreword

This guide presents a design for building-level school improvement and suggests some possible goals and activities to bring about such improvement. In discussing the concept of school improvement, it becomes apparent that most of the activities involved are not really new. The "newness" lies in the coordination of these efforts, all aimed at a common goal—improvement of management and instruction to increase the overall effectiveness of the school. As mentioned, this guide focuses on improvement within the individual school, rather than in the district or a particular grade level or subject area; however, planning and support of building-level school improvement is generated at the district level.

When speaking of school improvement, one must consider the characteristics that make an effective school. These characteristics form the basis for school improvement plans. Therefore, information presented in this guide is based upon effective-schools research and school improvement programs in Wisconsin and the rest of the nation. Also, this guide links the Wisconsin educational standards with school-effectiveness research, with a goal of helping schools begin the improvement process.

Herbert J. Grover
State Superintendent

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Introduction

In recent years, much research has been devoted to describing the characteristics of effective schools. Many national publications have devoted entire issues to the movement. Because the characteristics of effective schools form the basis for school improvement plans, this guide is meant to provide a summary of effective-schools research to encourage schools and districts to become familiar with and engage in the improvement process.

The first section of this guide describes what a school district needs to consider when beginning the school improvement process. The Wisconsin educational standards are combined with the elements of effective schools to create a school improvement design. A discussion on needs assessment and goal setting conclude the section.

A three-step design for building-level school improvement is described in the second section. This design, which is based upon the concept of site-based school management, includes an initiation process, a delivery model, and a continuation process.

Section 3 contains descriptions of the effectiveness elements along with worksheets to help in the planning process. Sample plans, goals, and activities are provided. These samples are designed to be combined with the elements in Section 1 to help people successfully begin the school improvement process.

Section 4 outlines several successful projects and gives references for further information. These projects give examples of how school improvement can work.

Background 1

Wisconsin Educational Standards

Wisconsin educators and education policymakers participated significantly in the development of Wisconsin's educational standards. The 20 standards—half of them enacted in 1973 and the other half in 1985—fulfill a state constitutional requirement. Article X of the Wisconsin Constitution requires that the legislature create school districts "as nearly uniform as possible."

The 20 standards are a comprehensive and integrated set of requirements intended to guarantee every Wisconsin student equal access to a quality education. By establishing minimum expectations for every district's total education program, the standards signal the clear intent of the state that equal educational opportunities will be provided to all children, regardless of where they live.

The Standards and School Effectiveness

The Wisconsin school district standards and their administrative rules are given in Appendix A. The 20 standards are based on current education literature and on research about effective schools. Researchers studying schools where students learned and performed at or beyond the level expected found that no single component of school effectiveness, just like no one standard, stands a part as the crucial element for school success. All elements must blend together to provide a quality environment and promote excellence.

The research on effective schools identifies seven key elements all schools must address if all students are to learn. These seven elements are

- a clear school mission and accompanying instructional program,
- strong instructional leadership,
- an orderly school learning climate,
- ample opportunity for students to learn,
- high pupil expectations,
- frequent monitoring of pupil progress, and
- a high degree of parent and community involvement in the schools.

All 20 standards have a direct relationship to one or more of the seven elements of school effectiveness. For example, Standard (k) requires that a written sequential curriculum plan be developed. This plan becomes a part of the school mission statement and outlines the instructional program. The performance evaluation standard, Standard (q), and the staff development standard, Standard (b), along with the licensure requirement, Standard (a), serve to ensure strong instructional leadership. Pupil expectations and monitoring of pupil progress are represented in Standard (c), the reading standard, and Standards (r) and (s), the testing standards. Requirements dealing with school facilities, safety, and health care (nursing)—Standards (g) and (i)—indicate a concern about the climate of the school.

The opportunity to learn, as a school effectiveness component, has been represented in education literature as "time on task" or "academic engaged time." The opportunity to learn also means having a variety of course offerings in basic, applied, and special subject areas. Requirements for days and hours of instruction, Standard (f), instruction in special subjects, Standard (j), and regular instruction, Standard (L), all relate directly to giving students an equal opportunity to learn, both in time and in subject matter.

Additionally, parent and community involvement—another component of school effectiveness—is represented directly in the performance disclosure standard, the education for employment standard, and the gifted and talented program standard, Standards (o), (m), and (t), respectively. Figure 1 in this section shows the relationship between the standards and effective-schools characteristics.

While merely meeting the minimum level of compliance for the standards does not guarantee effective schools, the standards provide a positive means for school districts to analyze their current conditions and to set goals. Therefore, the standards serve as an important beginning step in the ongoing school improvement process.

Using the standards as a base, the school district administrative team should examine the current status of the district's schools. Personnel should then design a long-range plan—a set of goals and objectives—regarding the district's commitment to school improvement and educational excellence. This strategic plan should interrelate and combine the requirements of all the standards. It is through this interrelationship that school improvement will occur.

How a school district goes about implementing these standards depends on its unique local needs and conditions. Two options—a districtwide planning committee and school building-improvement councils—are discussed below.

Districtwide Planning Committee. The process of implementing the standards can fit into the district's public relations plan. By convening a districtwide planning committee made up of individuals who represent various interests of the staff and the community, the district will be involving people who have expertise and interest in the schools. The committee, working under the direction of the administration and school board, can serve as a communications link between the district and the community while developing the implementation plan. Subcommittees can be formed for specialized activities, but the central coordinating committee should monitor the work.

School Building-Improvement Councils. A second administrative option is to establish individual building-improvement councils. The make-up of these councils will vary, depending on the needs and mission of the school. A districtwide coordinating council can be formed, including representatives of each building committee, and the flow of activity will be from the school to the district. Much research on learning has determined that the individual school building, as an administrative unit, is the most effective locus for change and improvement. Section 2 of this guide gives one design for building-level improvement.

A district, depending on local needs and interest, could devise any other coordinative means for reviewing and planning for improvement. The next section, which is reprinted from *The Effective School Report* (June 1986), expands upon the districtwide involvement in school improvement efforts.

*School District Policies and Practices Which Promote School Effectiveness**

Studies of instructionally effective schools have focused upon schools which have been referred to as "statistical outliers" or "mavericks." The methodologies used in these studies have been designed to identify schools in which student achievement exceeds what might be expected given the socioeconomic background of the students. This research strategy assumes that the differences in levels of student achievement in these mavericks and schools more generally are related to policies, practices, and behaviors which

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occur in the daily life of the schools. The goal of the research on instructionally effective schools has been to identify the policies and practices of these schools which make them more effective.

Despite several methodological weaknesses, this research has proven useful in terms of identifying a set of general characteristics and processes which seem to correlate with school effectiveness in individual schools. However, little work has been done which looks either at unusually effective school districts or at the role of the superintendent or other district office administrators in promoting school effectiveness across the schools in a district. While such research is needed, the research which has already been conducted on effective schools can provide guidance on the role of the district office in improving student achievement.

In this article, we focus on the implications of the current literature on instructionally effective schools for the role of the district office. More specifically, we identify specific policies and practices which can be implemented at the school district level and which will enhance the ability of schools to promote greater student achievement in basic skill subjects.

Elsewhere we have presented a framework for school effectiveness based upon the literature on instructionally effective schools, teacher effectiveness, and organizational change as well as on our own research on effective schools and our experience in conducting district-level policy analysis and development in a school district. This framework encompasses 14 variables which have consistently been found to be associated with greater school effectiveness. Certain of these effectiveness variables seem particularly susceptible to district-level policy analysis and development. Given the purpose of this article, we limit our discussion to these particular variables and their implications for the role of the district office in promoting school effectiveness.

School Effectiveness Variables and the District Office

Seven of the major school effectiveness variables apparently can be controlled at the district office level. They are

- clear school mission;
- student opportunity to learn;
- tightly coupled curriculum;
- high expectations and standards for student achievement;
- monitoring student progress;
- safe, orderly environment; and
- instructional leadership.

Each of these variables will be defined and the implications for district-level intervention will be discussed in terms of specific policies and practices which can be taken by district office administrators to improve school effectiveness at teaching reading and math.

Clear School Mission. Although most schools are characterized by vague, unclear, and multiple goals, instructionally effective schools tend to have a clearly defined mission, the improvement of student achievement. This basic goal is found in two forms. It is often embodied in a school norm in which academic matters and student achievement are highly prized. It can also be reflected in the presence of a few highly coordinated supporting goals. Emphasis is on the achievement of basic skills, particularly in reading and math. Goals are often framed in a way that can be measured. Target dates and responsibilities may also accompany the goal statements. Finally, communication about the goals as well as progress toward them is a regular part of the school activities with staff and parents.

The district office can help schools define their mission by first developing a district mission statement which defines the goals of the school district. This statement should be relatively short and to the point. What are the goals and priorities of the school district? Then each school should be asked to develop a school goal statement which reflects the goals of the district and focuses staff attention more specifically on a few important needs of the school for the coming year. Guidelines for writing school goals can be discussed with administrators, as well as ways to obtain teacher and parent input in the development of the goals.

A variety of data should be used to identify the school's annual goals. For example, student achievement data, parent perceptions of the school, and teacher opinions and concerns may be used. It is important that the number of schoolwide goals be limited to about six for a given year or it becomes difficult to coordinate them and to maintain a schoolwide focus. These

goals should be referred to during the course of the year as the staff makes decisions regarding curricular programs and materials, staff development, teacher assignment, budget development, and resource allocation.

Student Opportunity to Learn. Three aspects of student opportunity to learn which have been associated with school effectiveness are allocated and engaged time, content covered, and success rate. In classrooms where students spend more time engaged in learning, they learn more. In schools where policies and practices maximize and protect instructional time, students achieve more. In instructionally effective schools, students are also required to do more school work, both in school and at home. In addition, in these schools there is little "free time" during the period allocated for basic skills instruction. When students finish one assignment, they generally have some other academically oriented activity to turn to. Finally, in instructionally effective schools, students are able to achieve a success rate of 80 percent or above on most of their work. In short, in these maverick schools, more time is provided for learning, students are required to do more work, and they practice at a success rate that insures that learning occurs.

These findings have specific implications for the district office's role in promoting school effectiveness. There are several things that can be done at the district level with respect to maximizing and protecting allocated learning time.

- First, the total number of days in the school year should be protected against further erosion. The district office is the appropriate protector of this unit of instructional time since it is responsible, in most cases, for collective bargaining.
- Second, the total time of the school day also needs to be protected against shortening. This means holding on to a six- or seven-period school day at the secondary level and maintaining the length of the school day as a high priority when financial problems arise and cuts need to be made in district programs.
- Third, minimum amounts of time allocated for reading and math instruction can be set at the district level. Although this has traditionally been a teacher or, in some cases, a principal prerogative, districtwide minimum standards for time allocation in basic skills subjects make sense given the potential effect of this variable. A minimum of one hour per day should be allocated both for reading (exclusive of language arts and spelling) and math instruction.
- Fourth, the district office can define minimum expectations and guidelines for the amount and type of homework to be given at different levels of schooling. In addition, expectations of parents with respect to homework need to be explicitly defined and communicated to them by the school and/or district.
- Fifth, the district office can make principals aware of the importance of protecting instructional time from interruptions by public address announcements, office requests, and tardy students. All of the above practices involve building a policy structure regarding time allocation at the district and school levels within which classroom instruction will take place.
- The final example of how a district office can maximize instructional time is concerned with the internal operation of classrooms. Simply, the district can increase student opportunity to learn by promoting the improvement of teachers' classroom management skills. Effective classroom management helps insure that the time which has been allocated for instruction is being used for learning by students. The district office can improve the classroom management skills of teachers through staff development. These six policies and practices are available to district office administrators who wish to increase the allocated learning time in their district schools.

The second aspect of student opportunity to learn which district office administrators can focus on is the content covered by teachers. Minimum curricular expectations can be set at the district level by specifying grade-level objectives. In addition, graduation and specific course requirements can be defined at the district level which reflect high expectations in terms of the content to be covered throughout the schools in a district. An example would be to require three or four years of high school math rather than the one or two which are currently mandated in many districts. These curricular policies increase the likelihood that a significant portion of the total student time in school is used for academically oriented instruction.

The third component of student opportunity to learn, as defined earlier, is student success

rate. This component is best promoted by ensuring that teachers are aware of effective generic teaching strategies. This can be accomplished through staff development which can either be provided or arranged by the district office.

Tightly Coupled Curriculum. Simply stated, a tightly coupled curriculum is one in which the curricular materials employed, the instructional approaches used, and the assessment instruments selected are all tightly aligned with the basic objectives that students are expected to learn. In instructionally effective schools, a set of sequentially ordered objectives reflects the knowledge and skills needed for mastery of the basic subject matter. The instructional objectives provide the heart of instruction in basic subject areas.

This is an area where district office services can play a critical role in promoting individual school effectiveness.

- First, the district office can work with teachers and principals to articulate grade-level instructional objectives. The development of districtwide objectives makes it easier to coordinate the curriculum, that is, to align the teaching objectives with curricular materials used (basal and supplemental) and with tests.
- Second, the district can work with schools to adopt textbook series in reading and math for each school which are appropriate to the needs of the students and also match the district curricular objectives. The adoption of single math and reading series for use as the basal curriculum is particularly important in schools and districts where grade-level instructional objectives do not exist. The use of single text series in such cases ensures that there is continuity in the curricular objectives addressed by teachers.
- The third step in achieving a tightly coupled curriculum is to be sure that the curricular objectives and materials used by the schools match the material tested by the standardized test(s) used by the districts.

High Expectations and Standards for Student Achievement. High expectations establish a school norm which presses for student academic achievement and staff responsibility for student performance. Specifically, in instructionally effective schools high expectations refer to a climate where the staff

- expects students to do well,
- believes that virtually all students have the capacity to do well,
- believes in its ability to influence student achievement,
- accepts responsibility for student achievement, and
- is held accountable for student learning.

In effective schools this norm is brought about through school policies, practices, and behaviors which reflect the belief that virtually all students can and will do well.

The school district can promote higher expectations for student performance through the development of policies which set high standards of performance for students, teachers, and administrators. For example, district policies which maximize students' opportunity to learn could be expected to encourage higher expectations for students. Similarly, more stringent graduation requirements and a promotion policy which ensures that students master a minimum set of basic reading and math skills at each grade level communicate the message that all students are expected to learn. Personnel policies can tie into school expectations for student performance which reflect the notion that teachers and administrators can influence student achievement and are accountable for student performance.

Monitoring Student Progress. In instructionally effective schools, tests are taken seriously, whether they are weekly teacher assessments or yearly norm-referenced tests. Systematic procedures are used to assess the progress of students and to review test data. Monitoring procedures are centered around the objectives being taught. Teachers and students know where students stand; students are not allowed to fall between the cracks. Test results are discussed with the entire school staff and individual teachers. These results are used for instructional and curricular planning as well as for developing school goals.

The district office can aid schools in monitoring student progress by insuring that a systematic testing program is in place. This should include both a standardized test and a criterion-referenced test. The testing program should have a high priority within the district and should not be cut in the face of financial problems. The district office can also help the principals by providing graphic illustrations for schools of their schoolwide and grade-level performance on the

tests. Finally, the district can help ensure that monitoring is systematic by providing charts for individual student files which show student progress on tests and skill objectives over time.

Safe and Orderly Environment. Student learning within the classroom is influenced by the extent to which the school environment is safe and orderly and there is consistent enforcement of schoolwide behavioral standards. Discipline systems in instructionally effective schools tend to emphasize a few major standards or rules. The rules are specific and easy to understand; teachers and students have input into the development of the schoolwide rules. Consequently, rules are agreed upon throughout the school and are more likely to be followed by students and enforced by all teachers.

The key to this school effectiveness factor is that discipline is a schoolwide issue. The district office can promote this factor primarily by encouraging schoolwide staff development programs which approach discipline as a school as well as classroom-level issue.

Instructional Leadership. The last effectiveness variable which we will address in the context of the district office role in school improvement is strong administrative leadership, especially in the areas of curriculum and instruction. Recent research shows that this type of leadership is not consistently provided in schools. Instructional leadership includes, among other things, assuming an important role in framing and communicating the school's goals, establishing expectations and standards, coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, promoting student opportunity to learn, and encouraging professional development for staff. Instructional leadership can be exercised through a variety of styles or ways; i.e., directly through close supervision of instruction and indirectly through policy formulation and control of work structure within which teachers practice.

Principal instructional leadership can be encouraged at the district level in three specific ways. First, staff should be promoted to positions of educational leadership within the district, particularly at the site level, on the basis of this variable. Screening and evaluation procedures should focus on the past record and potential of staff with respect to the components of this effectiveness factor; that is, to what extent does this candidate demonstrate the skills necessary to perform the role of instructional leader? The promotion of staff with instructional expertise into principalships will change the administrative norms within a district over time and demonstrate to teachers that effective instruction is the district's top priority.

Second, staff development for administrators would focus on curricular and instructional skills and issues. This might include training in supervision techniques, classroom management, or in-school goal development. Districtwide staff development for administrators, as well as teachers, should reflect instructional goals of the district. For example, if a district goal is to improve student writing skills, both teachers and administrators should be involved in staff development on this topic. Third, administrators should be actively involved in district curricular activities such as textbook adoption, development of instructional objectives, interpretation of district and school test results, and policymaking with respect to curricular and instructional issues.

Conclusion

In this article we have discussed some ways in which a school district administrator can play a leadership role in promoting school effectiveness. We reviewed seven of the major school effectiveness variables and identified specific policies and practices available to the district office administrator who wishes to support the efforts of individual schools to improve student achievement.

The role of the district office administrator in promoting school effectiveness across schools appears similar in many respects to that of the school principal in promoting effectiveness across classrooms within a school. The district office can assist schools in

- defining their goals;
- establishing high expectations and standards for student achievement;
- allocating and promoting the effective use of time for instruction;
- setting up a curricular structure within which instruction takes place;
- providing support services which insure systematic monitoring of student progress;

- aiding schools in the development of school-wide discipline systems; and
- developing policies and practices which insure that principals have the necessary skills to provide instructional leadership at the site level.

These functions of the district office parallel the functions of the principal reviewed under the heading of instructional leadership. Thus it seems that the school effectiveness research has implications for the general role of the district office in developing more effective schools and can provide guidance to specific ways in which this role can be implemented.

School Improvement in Wisconsin

The previous reprinted discussion shows how the school district must be the organizing vehicle for school improvement to occur.

School improvement is a process whereby a school or district seeks to maximize those characteristics or elements that are descriptive of effective schools. The elements mentioned in the previous discussion include the key elements of school improvement introduced at the beginning of this section.

The process of school improvement should include, but not be limited to, defining needs related to these seven key elements through the development of goals and objectives. The information that follows is intended to set the stage for school improvement planning in Wisconsin schools.

School improvement and school-effectiveness literature does not differentiate, to any great extent, between approaches to school improvement at the elementary, middle, or high school levels. Although the research in school improvement and school effectiveness has been conducted more in elementary schools than in secondary schools, several states have school improvement programs on a K-12 basis.

School improvement practices are expanding at the secondary level. High schools are often larger than elementary schools in the number of students, staff size, and variety of curricular offerings. Therefore, consensus on school improvement requires more time because more staff and curricular issues are involved. Although high schools are organizationally more complex, there is greater chance for shared instructional leadership through the involvement of department heads, assistant principals, and teachers.

Consensus building at the high school level could be done within each department for one or two elements of the school improvement program and on an all-school basis for the remainder of the elements. Students also could take a role in school improvement at the high school level. High school students can be an important support group in the continuation and expansion of school improvement.

Often what can be said about elementary or high schools is not necessarily true for middle-level schools. An approach to school improvement at the middle level is in some ways more complex and some ways more simple. Middle school philosophy and organizational principles seem ideally compatible with the concepts of school improvement and school effectiveness. On the other hand, no specific research or directives are readily available for those administering and staffing middle-level schools. Because school improvement and school effectiveness is perceived by writers and practitioners as highly specific for various settings and buildings, this lack of information for middle-level educators should not be an obstacle. The major considerations are whether a particular middle-level school is more like an elementary or high school and whether it is organized to reflect the characteristics of middle schools found in the literature of the middle school movement.

The design for school improvement goals and activities presented in this publication are appropriate for individual schools, school districts, and cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs) as a process for increasing school effectiveness.

Most innovations have begun with the premise that the professional staff needed retraining because of deficiencies in professional preparation programs or a lack of knowledge of the newest teaching and learning strategies and techniques. The school improvement and school-effectiveness movement suggests that the school staff can identify their needs. Further, the staff is viewed as being quite capable of cooperatively analyzing their school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively addressing any identified problems. Thus, school improvement can proceed by building upon existing staff knowledge

and expertise. That attitude is reflected throughout the school improvement design contained in this guide. The various sections are left open-ended with no pretense of being finished products or the only way to proceed.

The design, which is based on effective-schools research, links the standards, an organizational chart, and a needs-assessment survey. Each of the seven elements is briefly introduced, followed by a list of potential goals, activities, or actions.

No external "prescription" for school improvement can be complete. School improvement plans are highly personalized to each school building or district because they are based on the specific needs of the school or district. Space has been provided at the end of each list to write items pertaining to the specific situation.

It should also be understood that none of these elements for improvement stand on their own, they are not mutually exclusive, and each must be examined in light of the others in a coordinated effort. In addition, the seven elements that are highlighted in this guide should not discourage a district or school from adding to the list or categorizing the elements in some other fashion before or during the process of adopting a school improvement plan.

Figure 1 links the seven elements of school effectiveness to the related Wisconsin standards. All of the 20 standards have a relationship to one or more of the seven elements. The purpose for including this chart is to show that implementing programs to meet the standards is good school business. The standards mean effective schools, and school effectiveness means school improvement that leads to better learning and better experiences for all students.

The School Improvement Organizational Chart, Figure 2, is one way of organizing for the effort. Other models or processes could also be used in the design of a school improvement plan. It is essential, however, to create a structure, define roles and responsibilities, establish goals, and set time lines if improvement is going to occur.

Figure 1

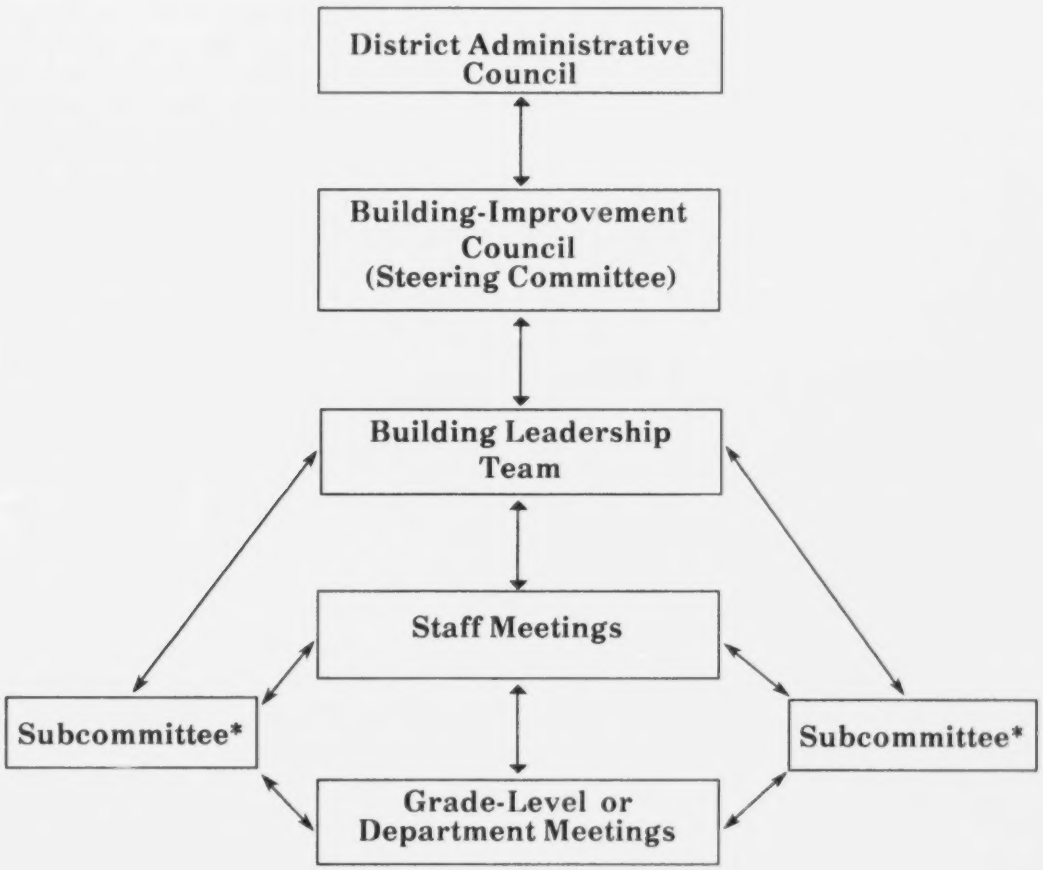
Elements of Effective Schools and Related Standards*

Element	Related Standards	Potentially Related Standards
Clear School Mission	(h) Library Media Services (j) Health, Physical Education, Art, and Music Instruction (k) Written, Sequential Curriculum	(b) Staff Development (L) Regular Instruction (m) Education for Employment (p) High School Graduation Standards
Strong Instructional Leadership	(a) Professional Staff Licensure (b) Staff Development (q) Personnel Evaluation	(e) Guidance and Counseling (o) Performance Disclosure Report
School Learning Climate	(g) Emergency Nursing Services (i) Safe and Healthful Facilities	(f) Days and Hours of Instruction
Opportunity to Learn	(d) 5-year-old Kindergarten (f) Days and Hours of Instruction (L) Regular Instruction	(h) Library Media Services (j) Health, Education, Art, and Music Instruction (n) Children At Risk
High Pupil Expectations	(n) Children At Risk (p) High School Graduation Standards	(c) Remedial Reading (k) Written, Sequential Curriculum (r) Third Grade Reading Test (t) Gifted and Talented
Monitoring of Pupil Progress	(c) Remedial Reading (e) Guidance and Counseling (r) Third Grade Reading Test (s) Achievement Tests	
Parent and Community Involvement	(m) Education for Employment (o) Performance Disclosure Report (t) Gifted and Talented	(g) Emergency Nursing Services (i) Safe and Healthful Facilities (q) Personnel Evaluation

**Adapted from* Wisconsin Educational Standards: A Blueprint for Excellence. *Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1987.*

Figure 2

School Improvement Organizational Chart



Councils, committees, teams, staff, and departments all deal with the following areas that are related to the common mission: goals, planning, leadership, needs assessment, implementation, support, feedback, coordination, and evaluation.

This model is only one suggested way to organize a process (committee structure) designed to involve broad participation at all levels (including a feedback mechanism).

**Subcommittees could deal with standard-specific programs such as Children At Risk— Standard (n), Education for Employment—Standard (m), or Gifted and Talented—Standard (t), as well as more general assignments such as school climate or instructional leadership. These programs can be done within a building or districtwide.*

School Improvement Needs Assessment

Once an organizational structure is designed, the school district must determine the needs for school improvement processes. Perceptions of a school or district can vary considerably depending on the people surveyed and the questions asked.

The needs-assessment survey in Appendix B relates to each of the seven basic elements of effective-schools research as adopted by the Department of Public Instruction. It can be administered to a variety of people to establish a point of reference, *based upon their perceptions*, from which priorities for school improvement can be established. It provides the school or district with a foundation from which it can begin its improvement process. This is fundamental to effective schooling in order to establish ownership and collaborative involvement based upon reason.

The efficacy of the instrument is not as important as the desire to know and understand how people feel about what is, in order to collectively plan for what should be. In that regard the survey instrument can be used as it is, or it can be revised to suit the user's needs. The important thing to understand is that effective schooling cannot occur without a planned process based upon factual data.

Steps in the improvement process include the following:

1. Determine an organizational structure.
2. Appoint the committees and establish their responsibilities.
3. Gather data through a needs assessment.
4. Set school improvement targets through goals, objectives, and activities.
5. Structure time lines and resources for goal attainment.
6. Evaluate the implementation procedure.

Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Once needs are established, it is essential for the people involved in the school improvement process to establish goals and objectives and plan activities to meet those needs. Generally speaking, goals are statements of broad intent or direction. They are rather nebulous and are not thought of as being measurable. For every element or category of school improvement in which a school is working, at least one goal should be developed.

Each developed goal should give rise to one or more objectives. A well-written objective tells a story. All too often objectives are written in a way that defies interpretation and does not indicate how they will be met. An objective statement such as "to raise achievement test scores" leaves a lot of room for misunderstanding when those charged with the task begin to work toward meeting the objective. The previous statement is more of a goal than it is an objective. A well-defined objective should contain the following six parts:

- *who* will be performing the action,
- *what* action will be shown,
- *object* of the action,
- *when* the action will occur,
- *measurement* techniques for determining whether the action occurred, and
- *criteria* for determining whether the action was successful.

The order of these six parts in the objective statement is not important as long as all six are included. An example of such an objective might be as follows:

> The XYZ Elementary School staff will increase their knowledge of classroom management techniques during the school year through a staff-development program as determined by a 25 percent increase on a pre/post-test to be developed.

The above objective contains all six parts, as follows:

- *who*—XYZ Elementary School staff,
- *what*—will increase their knowledge,
- *object*—classroom management techniques,
- *when*—during the school year,
- *measurement*—on a pre/post test to be developed, and
- *criteria*—25 percent increase in knowledge.

Activities are those tasks that must be accomplished to ensure that the objective can be met or at least measured. Activities may be ongoing during the life of an objective; they may be of the start-up type and last only a brief time; or they may depend upon the completion of other activities. For instance, you can't pretest the staff until the test has been developed. Activities are almost always listed in chronological order according to when they are to start, and they ordinarily contain three parts, as follows:

- what is to be done,
- who is responsible for seeing that the task is carried out, and
- when the activity will take place.

The order of the three parts in an activity statement is not important as long as all three are included. Sometimes it is easier to list activities in columns as shown in the example school improvement plans included in this guide. Some examples of activities related to the sample objective discussed previously are given in the chart below.

A single objective should give rise to many related activities. Close monitoring of activities will help insure that at least the objective can be measured and will help discover problems so changes can be made before it is too late.

Further assistance or information concerning goals, objectives, and activities is available from the Department of Public Instruction's Office of School Improvement.

Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date
Prepare program outline and schedule for staff development in classroom management techniques	Building-improvement council	June 1	June 15
Contact or secure presenters for staff development activities	Principal	June 15	July 15
Meet with all presenters to further plan staff development activities	Principal and building-improvement council	August 1	
Develop pre- and post-tests	Principal, building-improvement council, and presenters	August 2	August 25

A Design for Building-Level School Improvement 2

The design for school improvement in Wisconsin that is suggested in this guide has three parts. The first part is the *initiation process*, which has six steps similar to the usual process followed in the study and adoption of new projects or programs. The second part is the *delivery model*, which indicates how the selected seven elements of school improvement are related to four familiar components of a school operation. And the third part is the *continuation process*. Special emphasis is given to continuation, which often has been neglected in past school innovation efforts.

The Initiation Process

The six steps of the initiation process are

- orientation and dialogue,
- commitment,
- inventory and assessment,
- structural planning,
- implementation planning, and
- adoption.

These steps are discussed in detail on the following pages and are outlined in Figure 3.

Step 1: Orientation and Dialogue. In this step, Department of Public Instruction staff may meet with the district administrator and school board to discuss school improvement programs in other districts and states and potential programs for the local school. Additional considerations are time and financial commitments; services available from the DPI; and later, the sharing of local school improvement efforts and experiences with other school districts.

If the school board decides to proceed, there will be a meeting with a designated principal and a committee of selected teachers who will become the building steering committee for initiation of the program. Many of the same issues that were discussed with the board and the district administrator are repeated. The roles of the principal and the steering committee are crucial to the success or failure of the program.

If the decision is made to proceed further, a similar meeting for orientation and dialogue will be held with the entire school faculty. Department staff could aid in the orientation and dialogue, but the principal and other school leaders must demonstrate an understanding of the local program.

The principal and building steering committee may form several study committees, with steering committee members serving as chairpersons. Study committee work will later form the basis for implementation planning (see Step 5).

Step 2: Commitment. This process involves district and school staff, but does not directly involve DPI staff. If the district and school staff decide not to make a commitment, the orientation and dialogue will still prove valuable. However, if they decide to move ahead, they must commit the necessary time and monies to enter into and complete the next steps in the initiation process. (See Figure 3 for approximate timetable.)

Step 3: Inventory and Assessment. School staff may develop their own techniques and instruments or use the needs-assessment survey in Appendix B to inventory and assess their needs in relation to the seven elements of school improvement. The staff members should also review the school's status in relation to meeting the school district standards (Appendix A).

The school staff may also complete the school improvement profile in Appendix C which elicits information on school characteristics and practices in relation to the seven improvement elements. The profile contains questions that reflect a number of the issues raised in several national reports about the condition of education. The profile data might be incorporated into the school improvement plan; and the profile may be used as a resource guide for schools involved with the DPI in school improvement and will help define general school program needs.

In addition to the data from the needs assessment(s) and school improvement profile, student achievement data should be gathered from past years. Results from standardized tests, criterion-referenced tests, and state assessment tests will prove useful. In addition, mastery skill checklists and computerized grade and skill profiles and reports are helpful. School improvement is ultimately worth the time, effort, and expense if student achievement improves and if the improvement can be seen by school personnel and the community.

The data from the needs assessment(s), school profile, and the student achievement records serve several purposes. First, they act as a guide for addressing staff and student needs in the area of school improvement. The second and longer term benefit is to serve as baseline information and data for comparison. All data collected should be presented to the staff for reactions and general direction for the principal and steering committee to use when planning.

Step 4: Structural Planning. This planning is best accomplished at a setting away from the school building for a two- to three-day period. The plan should include general staff assignments and responsibilities, time frames, available resources, and procedures for adoption of the various final recommendations that come from staff study committees. The information is analyzed in relation to the elements of school improvement in the delivery model (see Figure 4).

The principal and steering committee should present the structural plan to the entire faculty.

Step 5: Implementation Planning. Under the direction of the principal and steering committee, several study committees devise an implementation plan for each element of the school improvement delivery model. The committees can use the suggested activities and resources noted in this guide and seek additional information from literature related to school improvement and school effectiveness. The steering committee compiles and edits the study committee reports and submits them to the staff for study and comment.

Step 6: Adoption. This step involves getting approval of the implementation plan from the entire faculty. Portions of the plan that are not accepted will be revised until acceptable.

Figure 3

A Design for Building-Level School Improvement: Initiation

Step No. 1: Orientation and Dialogue (at the District and Building Levels)
A. Meet with board and district administrator. (1-2 hours)
B. Meet with principal and four or five teachers—steering committee. (1-2 hours)
C. Hold total staff meeting. (1 hour)
Step No. 2: Commitment (at the District and Building Levels)
A. Make a decision to continue interest in programs.
B. Commit necessary time and/or money to enter into next steps.
Step No. 3: Inventory and Assessment
A. All staff complete a needs assessment. (1 hour)
B. Administration and selected staff complete a school profile.*
C. Analyze data.*
D. Present analysis to total staff meeting. (1 hour)
Step No. 4: Structural Planning
A. Prepare tentative plan. (2-3 days)
B. Approve staff to continue. (1 hour)
Step No. 5: Implementation Planning
A. Individual study committees use structural plans and processes to devise implementation plan for each targeted element of the model. (1 day)
B. Individual study committees present plan to steering committee. (1-3 hours)
Step No. 6: Adoption
A. Adopt plan/program at total staff meeting. (1½ hours)

** This time will vary depending on the type and size of the school. Completion of the profile will range from 2-4 hours, and analysis will range from 8-16 hours.*

The Delivery Model

The delivery model places the seven elements of school improvement in the context of three common components of a school operation: administration, curriculum, and instruction. Although the three components can be separated in theory, there is much overlapping in a school setting. The product of the well-planned school improvement efforts described in this guide should be increased student achievement in academic and nonacademic areas. The delivery model components are outlined in Figure 4 and discussed in detail below.

Administration. This includes the elements of strong instructional leadership, orderly school climate, and clear school mission (See Figure 4 for related standards). Although strong instructional leadership should come from the principal, shared or joint leadership within a building will enhance the school improvement program. This is consistent with the concept of site-based school management in which parents and community members are included.

Curriculum. A planned, ongoing, and systematic curriculum with written goals and objectives is the basis of this delivery model component. There will be variance among and between schools and school districts on the amount of work or refinement that is needed in this critical area, which is the major emphasis of Standard (k), the curriculum plan standard.

Instruction. The elements of high pupil expectations, monitoring of pupil progress, opportunity to learn and time on task, and parent and community involvement are crucial in education and form the arena for program implementation and evaluation.

The interaction of administration, curriculum, and instruction with the specific school improvement elements contained therein should result in increased achievement for all students in the required academic areas along with increased achievement in other curricular areas. By paying attention to the list of standards suggested, the school improvement efforts should also confirm the school's compliance with the standards.

Figure 4

A Design for Building-Level School Improvement: Delivery Model
Administration
— Strong instructional leadership—Standards (a), (b), and (g)
— Orderly school climate—Standards (g) and (i)
— Clear school mission—Standards (h) and (j)
Curriculum
— A planned, ongoing, and systematic curriculum with written goals and objectives—Standard (k)
Instruction
— High pupil expectations—Standards (n) and (p)
— Monitoring of pupil progress—Standards (c), (e), (r), and (s)
— Opportunity to learn and academic engaged time—Standards (d), (f), and (L)
— Parent and community involvement—Standards (m), (o), and (t)

The Continuation Process

Although the continuation process could be more explicitly built into the delivery model, special prominence is given continuation in this design for school improvement because of the challenge of sustaining educational innovations and new programs. The continuation process is broken into the following three parts:

- continuation through collaborative leadership structure(s),
- continuation through the involvement of significant support groups, and
- continuation through developmental activities.

These three parts are discussed in detail below and outlined in Figure 5.

Continuation through Collaborative Leadership Structure(s). A broad base of leadership direction and staff involvement is proposed to work against the "natural law" of atrophy and erosion of new ideas and programs. This leads to the emphasis on collaborative leadership that is inherent in the continuation process.

Strong and ongoing leadership from the school's principal and people in other leadership positions will sustain a school improvement program. In addition, collaborative leadership in other spheres involving a building-improvement council, or similarly titled leadership group, will enhance the program and the odds that things will continue on track as principals and key faculty members change. Assistant principals, department chairpeople, and grade-level representatives may have significant leadership roles depending on school size, type, and organizational pattern. Although the responsibility may be shared, the principal is the key figure in establishing and maintaining the leadership element of the program. The building-improvement council should have a majority of classroom teachers as members.

No one approach must be used in establishing a collaborative leadership structure. Cross-grade representation is a meaningful option at the elementary level, whereas representation by department might be a major consideration at the secondary level. Several members of the building-improvement council could also serve as chairpeople of staff committees that relate to aspects of the program.

If change is to endure, staff members need to know what is happening and need the opportunity to be part of the input and feedback process. An ongoing communication system is difficult to sustain because of time constraints and, on occasion, an attitude of disinterest and distrust. The building-improvement council can provide the opportunity for staff communication and collaborative leadership that is deemed important to sustaining and continuing the school improvement program.

Those involved in collaborative leadership should perform the following tasks:

- ongoing monitoring of implementation of the model as evidenced by instructional focus and student achievement data;
- periodic evaluation of all elements of the model, including the collaborative leadership structure; and
- identification of target areas of the model for redesign based on information from monitoring, evaluation, and expressed staff needs.

The council should compile an annual report for the staff and support groups that includes documentation and evaluation related to the above tasks.

Continuation through the Involvement of Significant Support Groups. School improvement outcomes and plans should be shared with the significant support groups, and assistance should be requested from them. The groups may include district-level administrators, school board members, parents, students, and representatives of the business community. Lack of support or understanding of any of the support groups will place the continuation of the program in jeopardy. Support from the potential support groups may yield not only the freedom to continue and to grow but may offer human resources and monetary support as well.

Continuation through Developmental Activities. Time and money for developmental activities are—and probably will continue to be— precious commodities and must be budgeted for and/or reallocated. Because school improvement will be the focus of the school, developmental activi-

ties related to the needs of staff identified through the monitoring and evaluation efforts should take precedence over other developmental work. Routine staff meeting time should be increasingly devoted to the school improvement program, and less to administrative details that could be communicated in other ways.

This model is offered as a possible scenario for schools to consider; other models may be just as effective. Leadership must come from the staff to develop an organizational framework that will be acceptable to all staff members and that will serve the needs identified for the specific school's improvement program.

Figure 5

A Design for Building-Level School Improvement: Continuation

Continuation through Collaborative Leadership Structure(s)

— Continually monitor the implementation of the model with attention to instructional focus and student achievement data.

— Periodically evaluate all elements of the school, including the collaborative leadership structure.

— Select specific areas of the model to be redesigned based on monitoring and evaluation and expressed staff needs.

Continuation through the Involvement of Significant Support Groups

— Outcomes and plans are shared with and assistance is requested from district administrators, school board members, parents, business and industry representatives, and students.

Continuation through Developmental Activities

— Developmental activities are related to needs identified through the monitoring and evaluation efforts of collaborative leadership structures.

— Time and financial resources are harmonized with developmental activities.

** Although the continuation process could be more explicitly built into the delivery model, special prominence is given to continuation in this model because of the difficulty in sustaining educational innovations and initiatives in the past.*

Summary

This section outlined one possible design for building-level school improvement. The components of this building effectiveness and renewal technique include

- The Initiation Process
  - — orientation and dialogue
  - — commitment
  - — inventory and assessment
  - — structural planning
  - — implementation planning
  - — adoption
- The Delivery Model
  - — administration
  - — curriculum
  - — instruction
- The Continuation Process
  - — collaborative leadership
  - — significant support groups
  - — developmental activities

The Elements of School Improvement 3

This section contains example goals, suggested activities and sample plans for each of the seven elements of school improvement that were listed in Section 1. The lists are not all-inclusive, and people involved in school improvement will probably have other ideas to add to the list. The lists are not meant to be recipes either. They are general in nature, and what might prove to be workable in one school may not work in another.

School Mission and Instructional Program

In essence, a school's mission is its reason for being. Although some schools may have had sufficient head start due to student-body composition, an effective school or district at sometime made the commitment—through its mission—to become an effective school. Through this mission, the administration and teachers share an understanding of and a commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, objectives, and assessment procedures that are directly related to the mission statement. In effective schools, student acquisition and maintenance of basic skills take precedence over all other school activities. Schools and districts must be ready to reallocate energy and resources from other activities to the basic skills program when necessary.

Based on the school mission, an accompanying instructional program should be developed, implemented, and refined. The instructional program, together with its curricular implications, is the crux of school improvement.

It is for this reason that Standard (k), the curriculum plan standard, is so important. A school district curriculum should include a general mission statement, along with a description of the instructional program including objectives, activities, and resources. School improvement efforts should be outlined in the mission statement and curriculum plan as shown in the examples that follow. The goals set for the school become the outline for the performance disclosure report required by Standard (o).

■ Sample 1

School Mission and Instructional Program Goals

1. To develop a clear school mission and accompanying curriculum
2. To implement a system of mastery instruction in all course areas
3. To establish cooperative grade-level committees to develop and implement instructional objectives for language arts and mathematics
4. To develop a remedial plan for students falling in the lower 20 percent of the student body on the standardized achievement tests
5. To establish a system for utilizing achievement test results to upgrade the instructional program
6. To develop a scope and sequence of skills taught in the school's language arts program
7. _____
   _____
   _____
8. _____
   _____
   _____
9. _____
   _____
   _____

Activities for Developing a School Mission and Instructional Program

1. Secure staff, parent, and student input (if appropriate) in developing a clear school mission.
2. Revise the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability mechanisms to fit the school mission.
3. Develop a concise and measurable set of instructional objectives for each grade level or course.
4. Gather or develop the instructional materials and the assessment materials needed to measure progress and mastery.
5. Encourage teachers to use the whole-class instructional approach for initial instruction of common objectives.
6. Encourage principals to establish a common performance standard for learning in the building and communicate this to all concerned (teachers, students, parents, and community members).
7. Establish grade-level or subject-area teacher committees to develop teaching units for objectives.
8. Develop a schoolwide commitment for student achievement of basic skills.
9. Encourage teachers to conduct instructional activities that promote interest and achievement through competition such as spelling bees and academic team contests.
10. _____
    _____
    _____
11. _____
    _____
    _____
12. _____
    _____
    _____

■ Sample 3

School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan

_____
School Name

Improvement Category: School Mission and Instructional Program

Goal: To develop a clear school mission statement

Objective:* During the first quarter of the school year, the building-improvement council will develop an acceptable school mission statement as evidenced by 90 percent of the staff and 80 percent of the parent advisory committee voting to accept the statement.

Evaluation Plan: Input from the staff and the parent advisory committee will be sought, respectively, at their regular meetings. Input from the general public will also be sought through the media and the first Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting. The final mission statement will be presented to the staff and the parent advisory committee at their October meetings, with voting to take place by paper ballot at the end of the meetings. Those absent from the meetings will be contacted, and a ballot will be sent to them. Votes will be counted, and percentages of acceptance will be calculated. If the criteria levels are not reached, further study will be undertaken, the statement revised, and another vote arranged.

Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date
1. Seek input on school mission from the school staff, parent advisory committee, and PTO.	Building-improvement council	September	Mid-October
2. Structure draft versions of the school mission statement based on input.	Principal and building-improvement council	September	Mid-October
3. Make regular reports to staff, parent advisory committee, and general public through presentations at meetings and articles in the school and community newspapers.	Building-improvement council	Mid-September	Mid-October
4. Prepare final version of the mission statement for presentation and design ballot.	Building-improvement council	Mid-October	Late October
5. Present and vote upon school mission statement at October staff meeting and October parent advisory committee meeting.	Building-improvement council	October 17th and October 20th	
6. Contact and mail ballots to those absent from the two meetings.	Principal	October 18th and October 21st	
7. Tally all ballots by group, and calculate percentages of acceptance.	Building-improvement council	October 26th	

**Another objective could be written concerning school mission articulation, or articulation could be included in the wording of this objective along with its corresponding effect on the evaluation plan and activities.*

Strong Instructional Leadership

Most of the research on effective schools has strongly emphasized the concept of the building principal as the instructional leader of the school. Although the principal has many functions, the role of establishing an effective instructional program is the most important. Obviously, the principal cannot do this alone, but should make sure it is accomplished. Consequently, the leader's role is one of setting the stage, coordinating the efforts of staff members, offering help and advice, clearing communication channels, and supporting the program.

Although much research stresses that the principal should take the leadership role, Brookover, et. al., (1982) states that there are effective schools in which someone other than the principal provides the leadership role in school improvement. This person might be the district administrator, assistant principal, curriculum director, or lead teacher. Also, specific behavior of the leadership person and leadership style may vary from school to school. The important thing is to accomplish the leadership tasks. The potential of collaborative leadership between administrators and teachers is examined elsewhere in this publication.

Staff development is a major organizing force in the planning of collaborative leadership. Because no one can perform a task without being adequately prepared, an appropriate staff development plan is essential to train the leaders.

With the above in mind, this section contains some possible goals and suggested activities to help develop strong instructional leadership. These are not meant to be all-inclusive lists; such an undertaking would not be possible because the needs of different schools vary considerably. The lists are contained here primarily to start people thinking. Space has been provided to list goals and activities pertinent to specific situations. Once goals have been established, the list of activities can be used to develop specific objectives and the processes to meet these objectives. A sample school improvement plan is also included.

■ Sample 4

Instructional Leadership Goals

1. To increase and improve communication channels within the building
2. To develop a system to determine how extensively the school improvement plan is being implemented
3. To provide for all staff a development program designed to put into practice the school improvement plan
4. To develop a model for promoting parent and community involvement in the school
5. To provide the support, means, and elements necessary to establish a safe and orderly school climate
6. To establish a cadre of teachers from the building who will serve as training personnel for staff members of other district schools that implement school improvement programs
7. To develop and implement a system for regular formative and summative evaluations of the school's instructional program
8. To develop and implement a system for rewarding staff members and students for positive achievements related to the school goals
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

Activities for Developing Strong Instructional Leadership

1. Schedule frequent conferences with teachers to review pupil progress, teacher plans, and strategies implemented.
2. Develop a weekly newsletter for improved communication of school events, including a "good news" section highlighting positive instructional ideas.
3. Conduct grade-level or subject-area meetings to address concerns and coordinate the curricular programs.
4. Develop a means—such as certificates, badges, public honor rolls, and displays of pupil projects—to emphasize students' academic excellence .
5. Translate and clarify state standards and district goals at the school building level.
6. Establish and support a policy regarding student absence and tardiness.
7. Distribute and discuss with staff test results, research findings related to building philosophy, and other basic indicators for positive goal setting and curriculum development.
8. Integrate the many specializations within the curriculum, such as gifted and talented, at-risk students, education for employment, and drug education.
9. Provide praise and other forms of recognition for positive teacher achievements related to the goals of the school.
10. Organize faculty meetings around instructional problems rather than administrative details.
11. Translate building goals into grade-level or subject-area instructional objectives.
12. Emphasize achievement, and give high priority to instruction and materials that foster academic success.
13. Set instructional strategies; take part in instructional decision making; and accept responsibility for decisions about methods, materials, and evaluation procedures.
14. _____
    _____
    _____
15. _____
    _____
    _____

■ Sample 6

School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan

_____
School Name

Improvement Category: Instructional Leadership

Goal: To improve communication between the building administration and the staff (including instructional and other professional staff, as well as custodial chief, food services chief, and transportation personnel, if appropriate)

Objective: During the school year, the principal will undertake a program to improve communication between the building administration and the staff as evidenced by an increase of 25 percent in the number of administrator-staff conferences held and recorded in a written log.

Evaluation Plan: The log will be maintained throughout the year. Total conferences will be calculated quarterly and compared with totals from the same quarters of the previous school year, and the percent of increase (or decrease) will be calculated to determine progress. At the conclusion of the school year, the grand total of conferences will be calculated and compared to the previous year's total, and the percent of increase (or decrease) will be calculated to determine if the objective met or surpassed the proposed level.

Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date
1. Set up a conference log, staff member by staff member, as in previous years, and determine type of content headings for log.	Principal	August 1	August 15
2. Based on staff schedules, allocate the equivalent of four hours per week for staff conferences.	Principal	August 15	August 19
3. Allocate one hour per week at various times (before and after class time, if necessary) when staff can schedule conferences with the principal to discuss problems, as needed.	Principal	August 15	August 19
4. Announce the communication conference program and its purpose and format at first general staff meeting of the school year.	Principal	August 25	
5. Schedule weekly conferences and communicate to staff.	Principal	Ongoing—every Friday	
6. Enter proper log commentaries, and discuss with individual staff members as appropriate.	Principal	Ongoing—during or following every conference	
7. Compile numbers of conferences, compare with last year's log, and calculate percent of increase.	Principal	Quarterly and at end of year (grand total)	

School Learning Climate

Lezotte, et. al., (1980) defines the school learning climate as "the norms, beliefs, and attitudes reflected in instructional patterns and behavior practices that enhance or impede student learning." Brookover, et. al., (1982) further develops the definition of school learning climate as follows:

1. School learning climate relates to student achievement and those factors within a school that affect achievement.

2. A school's learning climate is the collective set of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within a building. It goes beyond the individual to the group norms of a school. These norms tend to be maintained over time with new members being socialized into the prevailing sets of behaviors.

3. The school learning climate describes the school as a social system. Since schools share a common function in society, there is some similarity in learning climates. On the other hand, different schools stress different "philosophies," instructional practices and methodologies, beliefs, and expectations of students' abilities to learn. Consequently, school learning climate varies sufficiently to produce different levels of student achievements.

4. The school learning climate can be changed. Local and building norms do change, and the people who are members of the school social group are the change agents. Outsiders are unlikely to have much impact on the social group unless that group desires or is willing to change.

Most of the literature on school effectiveness and school improvement emphasizes the importance of a safe and orderly school climate in bringing about instructional improvements and subsequent maintenance of this improvement. The concept of learning climate goes beyond the minimal requirements of Standard (i). It should be noted, however, that programs to improve school climate may be in place for two to three years before any major positive change can be observed. Sample goals and activities designed to improve the learning climate of the school are included on the following pages. A sample school improvement plan is also included.

Sample 7

School Learning Climate Goals

1. To develop a plan for recognizing outstanding achievement of staff, parents, and students
2. To plan and implement a security and safety system for staff and students
3. To develop and articulate a set of appropriate school rules
4. To stimulate staff socialization through a program of faculty activities
5. To develop or obtain appropriate instrumentation to assess the current school learning climate and changes that occur over time
6. To provide opportunities for students to assume more responsibility for school activities and functions
7. To establish a peer tutoring and advising program
8. _____
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Activities for Enhancing the School Learning Climate

1. Develop a written statement of the purpose and beliefs of the school and a school achievement plan. These two statements should be developed by the entire school building staff with input from students and parents. (See Brookover, et. al., 1982, pp. 45-46, for an example.)

2. Develop a realistic set of school rules and expectations, and set up a plan for uniform enforcement. The rules and expectations should be developed by the total school building staff with input from students and parents.

3. State rules and expectations for parents, students, and staff via newsletters, meetings, open houses, and a school handbook that is distributed at the beginning of the school year.

4. Create a cooperative "climate watchers" process. (See Brookover, et. al., 1982, pp. 39-43, for a detailed discussion of the process.)

5. Establish a means for recognizing outstanding performance by students, parents, and staff.

6. Have the principal and assistant principal meet with each class to explain and reinforce school expectations for achievement, attitude, and attendance.

7. Recognize birthdays once a month with a special lunchroom celebration, card, and school pencil (or hold a similar event depending on grade level).

8. Invite parents to sit in on classes.

9. Provide functional support for teachers in resolving serious breaches of discipline.

10. Minimize interruptions of the normal school day. When interruptions, such as assembly programs, occur:

    a. provide advance notice to staff and students regarding the special activity,

    b. establish time limits for special activities,

    c. have alternate time schedules prepared in advance,

    d. assure equity in preempting class time for special activities, and

    e. provide an opportunity for staff members and students to have input into the selection of special assembly programs.

11. Survey teachers and students regarding their interest in student extracurricular activities.

12. Establish committees of staff members, parents, and students to consider local school problems.

13. Follow up on class period absences through parent contact and conferences with the student.

14. Establish a role-modeling program with faculty members regarding attendance, dress code, punctuality, behavior, attitude, and enthusiasm.

15. Be consistent in recognizing exemplary student achievement or behavior and in reacting to unacceptable student achievement or behavior.

16. Make classrooms and the school an attractive learning environment by using activity bulletin boards and display cabinets extensively.

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School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan

School Name

Improvement Category: School Learning Climate

Goal: To establish a peer-tutoring system in mathematics

Objective: During the school year, the building-improvement council will establish a peer-tutoring system in mathematics for students not meeting the minimum grade-level mathematics objectives. The system will be considered successful if 60 percent of the participating students meet the minimum grade-level objectives by the end of the school year.

Evaluation Plan: The guidance department will coordinate the system. Mathematics teachers will refer students to the system, conduct retesting, keep the appropriate records, and submit results of retesting to the guidance office along with regular marks at the end of each report card period (quarterly) for monitoring. The percent of tutees meeting minimum grade-level objectives during the reporting period will be calculated. A summary for the school year will be prepared at the end of May and compared to the criterion level to determine whether the objective has been met.

Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date
1. Arrange a meeting of guidance department staff, mathematics department staff, and the building-improvement council to structure the system and assign responsibilities, including appointing a guidance person who will coordinate the program.	Principal	August 25-26	
2. Have the coordinator meet with the student senate to explain the system and seek assistance in soliciting tutors.	Coordinator, student senate advisor	August 31	September 2
3. Solicit tutors. (Note: This might be done through peer nomination, staff nomination, seeking volunteers, or whatever means were developed as a result of Activities 1 and 2 above.)	Coordinator	September 6	September 9
4. Meet with tutors to explain the system and train as needed.	Coordinator, mathematics teachers	September 12	September 16
5. Refer students.	Mathematics teachers	September 19	Ongoing
6. Implement and maintain the system.	Coordinator	September 19	Ongoing
7. Submit reports and marks.	Mathematics teachers	Quarterly	
8. Calculate summaries and report on progress.	Coordinator	Quarterly	

Opportunity to Learn and Academic Engaged Time

Numerous studies have found that there is a direct relationship between student achievement and active learning time. Bloom (1978) found that an average of approximately six minutes a day over a two-week period can mean the difference between mastery and nonmastery of an objective among students needing remediation. However, this is not as simple as it may sound; the time needed for mastery will vary according to the subject, student, method of instruction, and other factors. It is safe to say, though, that generally the more time spent in active learning, the greater the learning that takes place.

Academic engaged time refers to the amount of time devoted to instruction and learning (Brookover, et. al., 1982, p. 150). Academic engaged time generally is determined by the teacher within the boundaries of scheduling constraints, and it involves the following three time factors:

- time allocated for instruction,
- time actually spent on instruction, and
- time the student is actively engaged in learning, which is referred to as time on task.

Frequently the time on task is considerably less than the time allocated for instruction. The time spent in passing out papers and materials, collecting lunch money, taking class attendance, and so on, greatly infringes on the time the student can be actively engaged in learning. Attendance also is an important factor in academic engaged time. Obviously, if the student is not in the classroom, the student cannot be involved in the particular learning situation. Teachers can plan their academic engaged time to maximize the actual time on task and instructional time. However, as with all school improvement elements, it takes schoolwide planning and cooperation of all involved to bring the improvement about. Those interested in further investigation of learning time should refer to pages 149-172 in Brookover, et. al. (1982) and to *Time to Learn* (Denham and Lieberman, eds., 1980).

Standard (f) states the minimum requirements for days and hours of instruction. These requirements serve as a beginning point for school district planning. The following pages contain some suggestions for goals and activities and a sample plan to help schools develop their efforts in improving the opportunity to learn and increasing academic engaged time. Space has been provided to add to these suggestions.

Opportunity to Learn and Academic Engaged Time Goals

1. To increase the amount of time available for instruction by developing a more efficient and effective school time schedule

2. To develop and implement a schoolwide policy on pupil attendance, truancy, and tardiness, including alternatives to suspension from school for severe truancy and tardiness problems

3. To develop and implement a model for teachers in planning for and managing instructional time

4. To set up a visitation and observation schedule for the principal to monitor classroom progress toward increasing students' time on task

5. To create a common school instructional calendar to coordinate the pace of skill instruction for classes that deal with the same subject matter (See Brookover, et. al., 1982, pp. 123-147.)

6. To develop and implement an action plan for the utilization of aides, volunteers, and tutors to increase the amount of instructional time and student time on task

7. To investigate the feasibility of lengthening the school day to provide more academic engaged time

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■ Sample 11

Activities for Increasing Opportunity to Learn and Academic Engaged Time

1. Teach procedures that will to cut down on the time needed for obtaining materials, passing out papers, taking attendance, and similar activities. Keep clerical chores to a minimum during class periods.

2. Develop and enforce a routine so teachers will know what materials will be needed for a class period so they can have materials ready and instruction can start promptly.

3. Schedule the maximum number of minutes daily for instruction, and maintain the schedule.

4. Monitor pupil behavior continually by visually scanning the classroom, moving about, and providing feedback to students.

5. Be aware of what students are doing and compare this to the characteristics of students on task. (See Brookover, et. al., 1982, p. 161.)

6. Plan carefully in advance for the immediate and long-term instructional needs of the class.

7. Reduce the amount of individual seatwork when possible. (Research shows that this is an excellent time for students to be off task.)

8. Coordinate special-class and compensatory-education scheduling so that students will not be taken from class during instruction in basic skills.

9. Increase the number of student-teacher interactions during an instructional period.

10. Establish, model, and enforce rules on time usage for students.

11. Supervise halls during passing periods so students get to class on time.

12. Limit help to individual students to not more than a few seconds at a time, but make sure help is available.

13. Have the principal and building-improvement council examine the current school time schedule and recommend changes to increase instructional time if appropriate.

14. Set up and strictly enforce procedures for following up on absences and tardinesses. Communicate to students the necessity of good attendance and school attendance expectations.

15. Use peer-observation feedback to help teachers maximize students' time on task.

16. Use academic games to develop skills and to foster interest in learning.

17. Encourage the principal and staff members to model and foster an awareness among students about using time productively.

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Sample 12

School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan

School Name

Improvement Category: Opportunity to Learn and Academic Engaged Time

Goal: To decrease truancy and tardiness

Objective: The school year will show a 10 percent decrease in truancy and a 15 percent decrease in tardiness by the students compared to the previous school year as evidenced by attendance reports.*

Evaluation Plan: The vice principal will keep records of truancy and tardiness. At the end of each month, totals for each category will be calculated and compared to the corresponding totals for the previous year, and percentages of change will be calculated. These figures will be accumulated on a year-to-date basis. Monthly comparisons will be used as a program monitoring technique to indicate if changes in the program are called for. At the conclusion of the school year, the final figures will be compared to the previous year's summary, and a percent of change will be calculated to determine if the objective has been met.

Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date
1. Publish attendance expectations, requirements, and follow-up procedures in the local newspaper one week prior to the opening of school.	Principal	August 15	
2. Send a letter to parents requesting their cooperation and listing attendance expectations, requirements, and follow-up procedures.	Principal	August 15	
3. Hold a staff inservice to acquaint staff members with the program and the staff's role, requirements, and procedures.	Vice principal	August 18	
4. Present program and student attendance expectations and requirements at an opening-day assembly.	Vice principal	August 22	
5. Implement and maintain an attendance program.	Vice principal and staff	August 22	Ongoing
6. Calculate monthly truancy and tardiness figures and relate to comparable figures for the previous year; accumulate data on a year-to-date basis.	Vice principal	End of each month	
7. Summarize truancy and tardiness figures for the present year and compare to the previous year's summary, calculate percentages of change, and prepare a report.	Vice principal	June 4	June 8

**This objective assumes that a school policy and program for attendance was developed over the summer or at the end of the previous year. It would be expected that for such a program to be successful it would require staff input into its formulation, staff acceptance, clear and concise language, communication to all concerned, immediate follow-up for violations, strict and immediate enforcement, and administrative support.*

High Pupil Expectations

As stated by Brookover, et. al. (1982, p. 55), "what teachers expect, students are likely to learn." In effective schools, there is a climate of expectation in which the staff firmly believes that students can reach basic skill mastery and that the teachers have the necessary capabilities and instructional program to bring students to such mastery. In essence, students are not allowed to attain less than minimum mastery of basic skills at their specific level. Although this is easier said than done, many schools have demonstrated that basic skill mastery can be achieved. In such schools, high expectations for student learning have been set and communicated to all concerned, and instructional programs have been set in motion to achieve these expectations. Teachers in effective schools understand the sources of and reason for teacher expectations, and different levels of expectations are unconsciously transmitted by teachers in a variety of situations.

The purpose of this section is not to deliver a complete treatise on setting and attaining high pupil expectations but to stimulate interest in this area. However, those who want more information should consult pages 55-75 of Brookover, et. al., (1982) for a thorough discussion of expectations for learning.

Improvement program planners must be aware of the capabilities of students who are considered at-risk and gifted and talented, as discussed in Standards (n) and (t), respectively. Appropriate expectations must be planned for them as well as average students. The high school graduation standard, Standard (p), serves as a basis of expectations for secondary students. Schools need to go beyond these basic requirements to make school a meaningful experience for all students.

The following pages contain suggested goals and activities for attaining high pupil expectations. School staff are urged to add their own ideas to these lists. A sample plan for attaining high pupil expectations is also included.

■ Sample 13

High Pupil Expectation Goals

1. To develop a program to build self-esteem through effective instruction and remediation of skill deficits

2. To implement a feedback system regarding how well teachers communicate different levels of expectations to students

3. To promote an awareness of the sources of and the reasons for teacher expectations and how such expectations are transmitted

4. To develop, communicate, and implement a schoolwide homework policy

5. To examine and revise the instructional program to ensure that high student expectations can be put into operation

6. To develop a program to communicate to students, parents, and others the learning expectations for each course, and to develop a follow-up program to use when student work does not meet these expectations

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Activities for Attaining High Pupil Expectations

1. Use group techniques to deal with problems of low expectations among staff, students, parents, or community members.
2. Encourage every student to actively participate in every class.
3. Promptly contact the parent(s) when a student's work falls short of expectations.
4. Require homework daily from every student and follow up immediately when a student's work does not meet expectations.
5. Encourage principal and staff to set high but realistic pupil standards. (This can be tied in with the school achievement goals listed in the Monitoring of Pupil Progress section.)
6. Set up staff development sessions relating to the sources of and the reasons for differing expectations for students, parents, teachers, and the community.
7. Implement a process to improve the student learning climate (described previously). (Research has shown that teacher expectations and learning climate are closely related.)
8. Establish a process for all students to master their age- and grade-level objectives.
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■ Sample 15

School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan

School Name

Improvement Category: Pupil Expectations

Goal: To develop, communicate, and implement a schoolwide homework policy

Objective: As per school board directive, the school staff will develop a written schoolwide homework policy during the last quarter of the school year, to be implemented during the following school year. The policy will be adopted upon a majority vote by the board of education.

Evaluation Plan: Progress toward the written schoolwide homework policy will be presented at each regular board meeting during the last quarter of the year by the principal or a homework policy committee member (commitee discussed in "Activities" below). Board feedback will be noted and submitted to the committee for action. At the June board meeting, the policy will be presented for board action. Acceptance by four of the seven board members will be necessary for the objective to be met. Lacking such a majority, the policy will be revised and presented at the July board meeting for another vote.

Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date
1. Appoint homework policy committee to include one representative from each major department, two representatives from other departments, two students, and two parents.	Principal	March 19	March 23
2. At the first committee meeting, explain the charge to the committee and elect a chairperson.	Principal	March 26	March 30
3. Hold regular committee meetings at least biweekly to formulate the homework policy.	Chairperson	April 2	May 25
4. Give progress reports at staff meetings and regular board meetings, and solicit feedback to take back to the committee.	Principal, chairperson, committee members	April 2	May 18
5. Schedule and publicize a hearing date for final input regarding the policy. (The hearing should be open to staff, students, parents, and community members.)	Chairperson	May 21	May 25
6. Publicize the final rough draft of the homework policy in the school newspaper (to students) and in the local media.	Chairperson	May 21	May 25
7. Finalize the written policy based on hearing results; publish the final policy and send copies to board members.	Committee	May 28	June 1
8. Present homework policy to board for vote.	Principal, chairperson		

Monitoring of Pupil Progress

Frequent monitoring of pupil progress is essential in any school improvement effort. The information obtained is used to determine mastery of objectives and subject matter, as well as to determine what changes need to be made in the instructional program. Research has shown that schools can increase student achievement when evaluation data are used to guide changes in curriculum and instruction. Obviously, the collection and use of evaluation and monitoring information should be an ongoing part of any school improvement effort. Frequent monitoring of pupil progress includes a wide spectrum of evaluation activities—from simple observation and testing on a day's lesson to systemwide criterion-referenced standardized achievement tests, as defined by Standard (s). It is essential that such monitoring of pupil progress be done in an organized and planned way, especially at the building and classroom levels. Effective schools are characterized by teachers and principals who are constantly aware of pupil progress toward their instructional objectives.

Example goals and activities for developing a system for monitoring pupil progress are presented on the following pages. Schools may use any number of these ideas in developing their plans. A sample school improvement plan is also included.

Sample 16

Monitoring of Pupil Progress Goals

1. To establish a school achievement goal for the school year
2. To develop a framework for frequent classroom assessment of pupil progress using a variety of assessment means
3. To determine acceptable objective-mastery levels of all subject areas or at all grade levels
4. To initiate a staff-development program in test construction (tests to be made by the teachers)
5. To undertake a study of the current report card system in light of the school achievement goal and student expectations
6. To investigate the feasibility of participation in the state's competency-based testing program
7. To develop a collection of assessment material on a department-by-department basis
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Activities for Ensuring Frequent Monitoring of Pupil Progress

1. At the start of the school year, establish a formal student-testing schedule.
2. Communicate the formal student-testing schedule to the staff and also to the students and parents.
3. Familiarize the staff with the formal tests, types of results that will be generated, and how the results will be used to improve the instructional program and student performance.
4. Establish a record-keeping system for test results, and establish procedures for how the system will be used.
5. Assess student progress frequently by a variety of means such as compositions, oral responses, observations, and teacher-made tests.
6. Analyze student success or lack of success on assessment exercises to determine if any lessons have to be repeated.
7. Develop short reporting forms based upon instructional objectives so parents may be informed frequently of their child's progress toward mastery of objectives.
8. Determine what evaluation tools are most appropriate for each curricular area.
9. Set a realistic achievement goal for the school based upon current achievement results. (The goals should be higher than current results, but they should be realistic.)
10. Conduct a student assembly to announce the year's achievement goal and explain what is expected of students to reach the goal.
11. Hold a special meeting for parents to announce the year's achievement goal and discuss their part in helping the school achieve the goal. (This is probably a good time to issue the plan for maximizing parent/community participation and support for school improvement discussed in the Parent and Community Involvement section of this guide.)
12. Prepare students for formal testing to help eliminate anxiety and to reduce errors.
13. Use wall charts and other observable displays to indicate student's mastery of objectives. (Names need not be used if the teacher feels this is upsetting to students.)
14. Require each student to maintain a folder or notebook containing course objectives and progress toward mastery.
15. Communicate the importance of both formal and informal assessment to the student. Tie this in with the school achievement goals.

16. Encourage teachers of the same subject matter or grade level to work together to construct common instructional and assessment materials and exercises to facilitate teaching and mastery of objectives.

17. Use aggregated testing and assessment data for program evaluation.

18. Hold staff-development meetings to discuss how to use and interpret assessment data for instructional improvement.

19. Whenever possible, give students immediate feedback on both formal and informal assessment results.

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School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan

School Name

Improvement Category: Monitoring of Pupil Progress

Goal: To establish a school achievement goal and implementation plan for the coming year*

Objective: By the end of the spring semester, the principal and building-improvement council will establish a school achievement goal and implementation plan for the coming school year. Acceptance of the goal and plan will be evidenced by an affirmative vote of 85 percent of the faculty.

Evaluation Plan: Evaluation is quite straightforward for this objective. Once faculty input has been gathered, the goal and implementation plan will be finalized and presented at a general faculty meeting in mid-May for a vote. If 85 percent or more of the faculty vote to accept the goal and plan, the objective will have been met. If the vote fails, further revision will be necessary and a subsequent vote will be required.

Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date
1. Examine and summarize achievement test results.	Principal, guidance department, building-improvement council	April 4	April 8
2. Formulate a preliminary goal statement and implementation plan based upon an achievement test summary.	Principal, building-improvement council, department heads	April 11	April 29
3. Present preliminary goal statement and plan at general faculty meeting to seek input.	Building-improvement council, chairperson	May 2	
4. Finalize goal statement and plan based upon faculty input.	Principal, building-improvement council, department heads	May 3	May 13
5. Present finalized goal statement and plan at general faculty meeting for vote.	Building-improvement council, chairperson	May 16	
6. If the goal is accepted by 85 percent of the faculty, publish the goal and summary of the plan in the local newspaper.	Principal	May 20	

**It would be expected that the implementation plan would contain objectives to be measured in terms of achievement test score gains (or maintenance) as well as the testing schedule and would include activities for monitoring pupil progress.*

Parent and Community Involvement

Parents and community members can play an important role in school improvement efforts. Traditionally, their role has been one of attending Parent-Teacher Association or Parent-Teacher Organization meetings, providing refreshments for room parties, serving on advisory committees, and providing other service-type tasks. According to Brookover, et. al., (1982), traditional parent involvement has primarily been focused on help in matters not directly related to student achievement. Although the service-type role for parents and community is important and should continue, it must be of secondary importance to an emerging role in support of and involvement in the instructional program and school improvement efforts.

It is well known that the family is the most influential force in developing a student's attitudes and habits. The school must develop, publicize, and help implement ways to utilize the family relationship to support student achievement. Consequently, the administration and staff should determine the means for parents to improve their children's learning in the school and at home. Communication is highly important in this matter. For example, if the school has developed a homework policy, this policy must be made clear to parents, and it must include information about how they can support or become involved at home in implementing and maintaining this policy.

Parents and members of the local business community are very important to the successful implementation of Standard (m), the education for employment standard. The education for employment council and the school-business partnership council must have members from community businesses or labor groups. The education for employment council can help initiate school improvement efforts as well as give advice on employability needs.

The following pages consist of some suggested school goals and activities for encouraging a high degree of parent and community involvement. These lists are not meant to be complete, and all suggestions will not be appropriate to all situations. An example page from a school improvement plan completes the section.

Parent and Community Involvement Goals

1. To develop and distribute a set of procedures to communicate the school improvement plan to parents and the community
2. To develop a plan for improving parent participation in school activities
3. To set up a program for training parents as tutors
4. To devise a system that will ensure active parent and community representation on all appropriate school committees
5. To develop a means to ensure adequate communication between school and parents regarding the instructional program and progress toward the school's academic goals
6. To establish partnerships that support the instructional program through the exchange of resources such as speakers, field trips, and similar services
7. To undertake a cooperative study of the structure of the Parent-Teacher Organization to determine how the organization can best serve the school and the community
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Sample 20

Activities for Encouraging a High Degree of Parent and Community Involvement

1. Organize a planning committee of parents and staff to develop activities for the year.
2. Name parents and other community people to serve on the school improvement committees.
3. Develop a parent resource reading area in the library.
4. Initiate a parent tutoring program.
5. Hold parent meetings at times that will encourage maximum attendance and involvement.
6. Develop a pamphlet for parents that communicates to them the different ways parents can become involved in the school (for example, tutoring programs and committee membership).
7. Make parents aware of the school improvement plan and how they can help in its implementation.
8. Develop a directory of community personnel and organizations that have services and resources available to schools.
9. Communicate to parents any school policies regarding homework, attendance, suspensions, promotion, school goals, and the like.
10. Develop a directory of student talent available to businesses and community groups.
11. Train a group of volunteer parents to work with other parents in regard to student and school problems.
12. Develop a plan for maximizing parent and community participation and support for school improvement.
13. Write news releases and public service announcements about the school improvement plan to send to newspapers and television and radio stations.
14. To enhance communication and interaction between adults and students, plan activities such as sporting events or picnics in which both students and adults can participate.
15. Develop a policy to encourage parents and the community to visit classrooms while classes are in session.

16. Early in the year, devote a staff meeting (or part of a meeting) to brainstorming on how to best involve parents to improve student achievement.

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■ Sample 21

School Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan

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School Name

Improvement Category: Parent and Community Involvement

Goal: To develop a means to ensure adequate communication among the school and parents and the community regarding the instructional program and progress toward the school's academic goals

Objective: During the school year, the staff will publish a monthly newsletter to inform parents of progress regarding the instructional program and academic goals. The objective will be considered met if 75 percent of a sample of parents say they find the newsletter informative and want it continued.

Evaluation Plan: A brief telephone survey about the newsletter will be developed in April. A systematic random sample* of 20 percent of the school's parents will be surveyed in May. If 75 percent say they think the newsletter is informative and want it continued, the objective will be considered met, and the newsletter will continue the following year.

Activities	Responsible Person(s)	Start Date	End Date
1. Seek staff volunteers to act as coordinators of the newsletter.	Principal	May 16	May 20
2. Develop format of the newsletter.	Principal, coordinators	August 22	August 24
3. Establish and communicate deadlines for each issue, a policy for distributing the newsletter (for example, whether each classroom will contribute and whether contributions will be summarized by grade), and printing and distribution means and dates.	Principal, coordinators	August 25	September 9
4. Prepare, print, and distribute the newsletter.	Coordinators	Monthly (September-May)	
5. Develop a telephone survey.	Coordinators	April 9	April 19
6. Pick a 20 percent systematic random sample of parents.	Principal	April 9	April 13
7. Seek volunteers to conduct the survey. (These could be parents or sixth-grade students, not just teachers.)	Principal	April 9	April 19
8. Announce the upcoming survey in the newsletter.	Coordinators	April issue	
9. Train volunteers to conduct the survey.	Coordinators	May 1	
10. Conduct the telephone survey.	Coordinators, volunteers	May 2	May 4
11. Summarize results, compare results regarding informativeness and interest in continuation, and report findings in the last newsletter of the year.	Principal, coordinators	May 8	May 25

**A systematic random sample is useful when choosing from a population (group) that is in some order such as an alphabetical list (for example, a mailing list). In this case, we need one out of every five on the list (20 percent). The first member of the sample is picked at random (drawn out of a hat) from the first five names on the list. After selecting the first member, count down five names to find the second, and so on.*

Resources 4

Overview

The Department of Public Instruction has embraced the substantive findings of effective-schools research and developed its design for building-level improvement (Section 2). Nine Chapter 2 minigrants and 12 cooperative educational service agency (CESA) school improvement grants have been funded to establish school improvement models based upon the seven elements of effective-schools research. These grant recipients were encouraged to incorporate the state standards in their improvement activities as well.

As a refresher, the seven basic elements of effective-schools research are

- a clear school mission and accompanying instructional program,
- strong instructional leadership,
- an orderly school learning climate,
- ample opportunity for students to learn,
- high pupil expectations,
- frequent monitoring of pupil progress, and
- a high degree of parent and community involvement in the schools.

As the 20 standards progressed toward becoming state initiatives, it became apparent that there was a functional relationship between the standards and the effective-schools research findings. A link was subsequently established in the book, *Wisconsin Educational Standards: A Blueprint for Excellence*. This book illustrates that the process identified in effective-schools research has practical applications related to the orderly implementation of the standards.

Process is the key word in effective-schools research because it systematically incorporates all of the seven elements into a plan and emphasizes that none of the elements alone can produce the desired result. The purpose of this section is to encourage each school or school district to become a part of, and to become familiar with, the effective-schools movement. The reason is simple and constant, nothing learned once is appropriate forever—it is necessary to keep learning.

In that regard, the DPI continues to provide technical assistance through the Office of School Improvement. However, individual schools, school districts, and CESAs are encouraged to establish their own self-help initiatives as they relate to effective schooling. Although process is the key, it can and should be applied in a manner that is most appropriate to each situation, which varies with size, location, and local circumstances.

One way to keep abreast of the effective-schools movement is to subscribe to *The Effective School Report*. Published monthly by the Kelwynn Group (New York, New York), this periodical reports the research and practices related to effective schools and includes current bibliographic materials that are produced nationwide.

Another method of staying informed of effective-schools information is to join the Network for Effective Schools, which is a partnership of professional educators who believe in the effective-schools research and practices and who are striving to assure that all children have an equal

opportunity to learn. The Network for Effective Schools provides for the exchange of information, the opportunity to recognize programs that work, the sharing of student achievement reports and actual case studies, and a forum for the future progress of the effective-schools movement.

Membership in the network is on an individual basis, and members receive the following benefits:

- a one-year subscription to *The Effective School Report* (or a one-year subscription added to a present subscription);
- a quarterly newsletter with effective school news and the network's membership list;
- a membership card and certificate;
- a 10 percent discount on all Kelwynn Group products such as books, instruments, and posters; and
- access to the Effective School Hotline.

In addition to the membership benefits listed above, members are encouraged to share information about their schools and effective school activities through the newsletter. For more information contact

The Network for Effective Schools
c/o The Kelwynn Group
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 2058
New York, NY 10163
(800) 874-9740

Model School Improvement Projects

The schools featured in this section were selected because they have been very successful in developing their project goals and objectives and because their project emphasis lends itself to being adapted by other schools. The DPI provided school improvement grants for these schools to develop their programs

Athens Elementary School, Athens School District

Project Coordinator: Margaret Wolding, principal, Athens Elementary School, Athens, WI 54411

Athens is a small, rural community with about 320 students in kindergarten through grade 8. "Project Pride" was developed to establish a more effective school program.

The three main areas of emphasis were

- to assist in the creation of a safe and positive learning environment,
- to create an environment that will ensure frequent and meaningful parental and community involvement in the instructional program, and
- to assist the staff with acquiring and maintaining high expectations for their students.

The process involved the establishment of an improvement council made up of parents and public and private school staff members, along with school board and administrative support. The council sponsored workshop and inservice activities aimed at developing staff and parent awareness, training, and involvement.

Goals and objectives were established and periodically evaluated to determine whether a measured result was occurring. Examples that illustrated the effectiveness of the objectives include the following:

- disciplinary referrals were down 50 percent after the first quarter;
- disciplinary referrals were down 75 percent in January compared to the previous year, and
- academic deficiency notices were down 50 percent from the previous year.

A calendar of events and deadlines were established for the year, and most of these were met. The board of education has encouraged the school to continue the program and has budgeted for the cost of subsequent activities.

Summary

Parent involvement in school decision making was an important component of "Project Pride" at Athens Elementary School. Parents attended regular meetings, where they discussed issues ranging from the regular school curriculum to seasonal programs. Parents also attended the Systematic Training for Effective Parents Seminars.

Parent and community involvement during "Project Pride" was linked to improving the

school climate by creating a safe and positive learning environment. Parent and community involvement also was coupled with staff development to establish high expectations for all students.

In conclusion, three of the elements of school improvement—an orderly school learning climate, high pupil expectations, and a high degree of parent and community involvement—were successfully blended at Athens to create a better school environment.

Sheridan Elementary School, Sheboygan Area School District

Project Coordinator: Marlin Tanck, director of instructional services, Sheboygan Area School District, 830 Virginia Avenue, Sheboygan, WI 53081

Sheridan Elementary School has 227 students in grades K through 5. It is an inner-city school that serves a racially mixed neighborhood.

Thirty-eight percent of the students are ethnic minorities; of these, 86 percent are Hmong or Hispanic. Twenty-six percent of the students are in the Chapter I program. A large percentage of the students come from disadvantaged or low socioeconomic families, and about 61 percent received some type of welfare during the 1986-87 school year. Student test scores in mathematics and reading are below the overall test scores of the district.

The "Building School Effectiveness" project was an excellent demonstration grant to test the soundness of effective-schools research—namely, that all students can learn and meet established school standards regardless of their socioeconomic background. The major objective was to establish a procedure for building-level school improvement based upon effective-schools research.

With the study group model in place, five other elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools planned to join in the school improvement process the next year.

The major goals established by building-improvement councils for the district were as follows:

- Ninety-three percent or more of the regular students shall demonstrate basic academic mastery.
- There shall be no significant difference in the percentage of disadvantaged students and the percentage of other students who demonstrate basic academic mastery.
- The school program shall contain seven proven characteristics of effective schools.

The following transitional goals were also established:

- There shall be a significant annual increase (+3 percent) in the percentage of students who demonstrate academic mastery.
- There shall be a significant annual decrease (−3 percent) in the difference between the percentage of disadvantaged students and the percentage of other students who demonstrate minimum academic mastery.
- There shall be an annual increase in the indicators of the elements of effective schools.

Attention to student achievement above and beyond basic academic skills is desired in the improvement process. Experience with school-effectiveness projects shows that there also are increases in outstanding achievement.

Thus, each school in the district should use the following goals to monitor and encourage outstanding achievement:

- There shall be an annual review of the percentage of students demonstrating superior academic mastery by scoring in stanines seven, eight, and nine on the comprehensive test of basic skills.
- Each school's faculty may consider other indicators of excellence, such as placements in the district "standards of excellence" program, earning of honors diplomas, results of college placement tests, enrollments in honors courses, and numbers of students on high honor rolls.

Summary

The Sheboygan Area School District has established the purest model related to effective-schools research. Their process has been expanded to district application and should result in significant measured improvement over the next few years.

Some districts and schools have not related their efforts to effective-schools research in total, but only toward a part of the process. It will be imperative for these schools to continue the process to include all the seven elements or to be satisfied with some measure of school improvement as opposed to an "effective-schools" result. The difference is very significant and should be fully understood. The potential to establish an effective school, based upon research, is well within the grasp of any school or district that understands the process and is willing to put forth the effort and commitment.

School improvement and effective schooling are not the same, and the terms should not be used interchangeably. The finest achievement would be to commit a school or district's efforts toward becoming an "effective school or district," but it won't happen without a fundamental knowledge of the research and the process involved.

Gifford Elementary School, Racine School District

Project Coordinator: Mike Frontier, principal, Gifford Elementary School, 8332 Northwestern Avenue, Racine, WI 53406

The Gifford Elementary School has 850 students in grades K-5. Thirty percent of these students are inner-city minorities, and ten percent are students with exceptional educational needs.

Although Gifford Elementary is basically comprised of average-ability students, their test scores, based upon the Sequential Test for Educational Progress, have been consistently higher than the other schools in the district on 14 of the 16 checkpoints on the test.

The basic thrust of Gifford's "Future School Project" was to foster basic skill achievement by incorporating the following techniques into the program:

- forming student groups to maximize verbalization and motivation;
- providing systematic computer instruction for all grades;
- integrating the social studies, science, art, and music curriculum areas based upon common themes;
- providing staff development in critical thinking skills related to "key teaching methods and cooperative learning";
- establishing a "model" school committee;
- identifying parental involvement as central to the project development and implementation; and
- maximizing basic development and time on task through the development of the integrated curriculum.

Summary

The Gifford Elementary project is an interesting approach to "effective schooling" because it establishes the need to consolidate and integrate the curriculum as a way to maximize time on task and as a way to effectively reach students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds.

The staff performed its own needs assessment and was prepared for their project work through inservice training in critical thinking skills, cooperative skill training, and cognitive skill identification activities in curricular development.

Parent involvement—with parents as active volunteers in the learning process—and "theme displays" were central to the project's success.

Staff development, staff involvement, parent involvement, and guidance and counseling activities related to careers, along with the sequential curriculum development, are all basic parts of effective-schools research and the state's standards for excellence. These items were all used in Gifford's project.

The Gifford project provides an excellent model for other schools, districts, or CESAs to adapt or adopt from as they implement the standards.

Parkview Junior High School, Parkview School District

Project Coordinator: Phyllis Steindl, counselor for grades 6 through 8, Parkview Junior High School, Orfordville, WI 53576

Parkview Junior High School has 201 seventh- and eighth-grade students and is housed in a building with students in grades 9 through 12.

The district is attempting—with the help of a school improvement grant—to establish an effective-schools program that would provide for the specific developmental and emotional needs of the junior high-age student.

District staff selected the advisement concept developed in the Wisconsin Renewal and Improvement of Secondary Education program and sponsored a three-day workshop for the staff members working in grades 7 and 8 and the counselor working with grades 6 through 8 to become more familiar with the advisement approach.

The staff, board members, and administrators visited the Cedarburg and Jefferson schools or had presenters from those schools assist in the faculty inservice and training.

The major objectives developed by the improvement council and staff members were as follows:

- Staff will review the major concepts of advisement programming.
- Staff will review the design of several successful programs.
- Staff will provide design input.
- Consultants will be retained to assist with the program.
- Staff will design various classroom activities that will support the program.
- Staff will develop an advisement handbook that will be the basis for the 1986-87 program.

The advisement program—with the slogan "Students are Number 1"—was designed to have the seventh- and eighth-grade students involved in a personalized program and school experience. This program included

- student responsibility for learning,
- a personalized school environment,
- better home-school relations,
- reinforcement for academic progress, and
- support for personal growth of individual students.

Summary

Advisement is a structured process that embraces the effective-schools research findings as its approach to effective schooling. The seven basic elements are included in the program plan, which establishes broad staff and community involvement.

West High School, West Bend School District

Project Coordinator: Paula Hansen, director of government programs, Silver Maple Elementary School, 5190 South 18th Avenue, West Bend, WI 53095

West High School has two areas of concern regarding student achievement. First, approximately 30 percent of the high school students require remediation on two or more of the competencies established on their locally devised competency-based test. Second, on the "Test of Cognitive Skills," data revealed a significant negative z score on the difference between achievement and anticipated achievement in reading comprehension, total reading, language expression, and total battery scores.

The National Academy of Sciences reported in its *High Schools and Changing Workplace* that "it is precisely in basic intellectual skills that young employees show the greatest deficiencies." That encouraged the West Bend School District to develop their "Challenges For Change" project which features and integrates the curriculum approach as the long-term solution to the district's concerns.

The curriculum coordinators, instructional specialists, administrators, and teacher representatives participated in a curriculum integration workshop to develop an integrated model that they could use. The model included training all high school staff members and inviting public and private representatives to participate.

The district's goal was to plan and implement a comprehensive program of curriculum

integration to improve high school students' basic skills.

The district's objectives were

- to develop a curriculum integration model;
- to provide teacher and instructional aide training in the process;
- to decrease the number of tenth-grade students needing remediation (from 30 percent to 20 percent) as a result of curriculum integration; and
- to decrease the z score differences between achievement and anticipated achievement for reading comprehension, total reading, language expression, and total battery (from differences of –10.34, –5.63, –7.04, and –2.13, respectively, to no differences) by the 1988-89 school year.

Summary

West High School pursued effective-schools research findings in an attempt to raise the school's overall achievement scores in those areas emphasized in national studies and closely related to the 20 Wisconsin school district standards.

The school's attempt to integrate its high school curriculum in basic skill areas is a unique and worthy approach that should serve as an outstanding model for replication.

The school made excellent progress in 1986-87 and should be able to provide technical assistance to other school districts interested in using the same approach.

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Appendixes 5

A. *School District Standards: Statutes and Administrative Rules*
B. *School Improvement Needs-Assessment Survey*
C. *School Improvement Program Profile*
D. *Resource Highlights for Effective Schools*

School District Standards: Statutes and Administrative Rules*

Statutes and Rules that Define the Standards

Wisconsin's school district standards are spelled out in both statutes and administrative rules. The statutes are found in sec. 121.02(1), (a)-(t), Wisconsin Statutes; and the rules are found in ch. PI 8.01(2), (a)-(t), Wisconsin Administrative Code. These statutes and rules correspond to Standards (a)-(t) as presented in this appendix.

Standard (a): Licensure

Statute: Ensure that every teacher, supervisor, administrator and professional staff member holds a certificate, license or permit to teach issued by the department before entering on duties for such position.

Rule: Each school district board shall certify annually that every teacher, supervisor, administrator, and other professional staff member has been issued a valid certificate, license or permit by the department for the position for which he/she is employed before entering on duties for such position and that a copy of the valid certificate, license, or permit is on file in the district.

Standard (b): Staff Development

Statute: Annually, establish with school board employes a professional staff development plan designed to meet the needs of individuals or curriculum areas in each school.

Rule: Each school district board shall annually establish a professional staff development plan designed to meet the needs of individuals or curriculum areas in each school. The plan shall be developed with the cooperative efforts of licensed support staff, instructional staff, and administrative staff.

Standard (c): Remedial Reading

Statute: Provision shall be made for remedial reading services for under-achieving students in grades kindergarten through grade 3.

Rule: Each school district shall identify and diagnose underachieving pupils in reading in grades kindergarten through third. Such identification and diagnosis shall be directed or performed by licensed personnel who have earned at least 6 semester credits in courses dealing with the measurement of reading skills and achievement and/or the diagnosis of reading difficulties. Children with such identified and diagnosed reading deficiencies shall receive instruction and services directed toward the removal of the deficiencies. Such instruction and services shall be coordinated with all other reading instruction.

Standard (d): Kindergarten

Statute: Operate a 5-year-old kindergarten program, except in union high school districts.

Rule: Each school district shall operate a kindergarten program in which all 5 year old children of the district may be enrolled. The teachers shall be licensed by the department to teach kindergarten. Physical facilities, equipment and materials shall be provided for a program which includes opportunities for learning basic concepts and skills in language arts, fine arts, social studies, science, mathematics, and physical education.

Standard (e): Guidance and Counseling Services

Statute: Provide guidance and counseling services.

Rule: Guidance and counseling services shall be provided for all pupils. The district shall have on file written evidence that its guidance and counseling program is systematically planned and directed by licensed guidance and counseling personnel. Guidance and counseling activities in grades 7 through 12 shall be performed by licensed guidance and counseling personnel. Direction of guidance and counseling activities in grades

**The statutes and rules listed in this appendix reflect the language that is effective September 1, 1988.*

kindergarten through 6 shall be provided by licensed guidance and counseling personnel. The program of guidance and counseling shall include providing vocational, educational, and personal-social information; pupil appraisal; placement; referral; research; and follow-up activities.

Standard (f): Days and Hours of Instruction

Statute: 1. Schedule at least 180 school days annually, less any days during which the state superintendent determines that school is not held or educational standards are not maintained as the result of a strike by school district employes.

2. Annually, schedule at least 437 hours of direct pupil instruction in kindergarten, at least 1,050 hours of pupil instruction in grades 1 to 6 and at least 1,137 hours of direct pupil instruction in grades 7 to 12. Scheduled hours under this subdivision include recess and time for pupils to transfer between classes but do not include the lunch period.

Rule: 1. Each school district board shall schedule at least 180 school days annually. A maximum of 5 days may be counted to meet this requirement if they are used for parent conferences or if school is closed by the school district administrator because of inclement weather. School days are further defined in s. 115.01(10), Stats. The 180 days requirement may be reduced for any days during which the state superintendent determines that school is not held or educational standards are not maintained as the result of a strike by school district employes.

2. Each school district board shall annually schedule and hold at least 437 hours of direct pupil instruction in kindergarten, at least 1,050 hours of direct pupil instruction in grades 1 through 6, and at least 1,137 hours of direct pupil instruction in grades 7 through 12. The school hours are computed as the period from the start to the close of each pupil's daily instructional schedule. Scheduled hours under this subdivision include recess and time for pupils to transfer between classes but do not include the lunch period. No more than 30 minutes per day may be counted for recess. In computing the minimum number of instructional hours under this subdivision, days and parts of days on which parent and teacher conferences are held, staff development or inservice programs are held, schools are closed for inclement weather, or when classes are not held may not be counted.

Standard (g): Emergency Nursing Services

Statute: Provide for emergency nursing services.

Rule: Emergency nursing service shall be provided under the direction of a nurse(s) registered in Wisconsin. Arrangements shall be made with a physician to serve as medical advisor for the emergency nursing service. Written policies for emergency nursing services shall be established. These policies shall include procedures for dealing with accidental injury, illness, and medication at all school sponsored activities. An annual review shall be made of the emergency nursing services. Emergency nursing services shall be available during the regular school day including curricular and co-curricular activities of pupils. Equipment and supplies for the emergency nursing services shall be readily accessible.

Standard (h): Library Media Services

Statute: Provide adequate instructional materials, texts and library services which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.

Rule: Each school district board shall:

1. Have on file a written, long-range plan for library services development which has been formulated by teachers, library and audiovisual personnel and administrators, and approved by the school district board.

2. Designate a licensed library media person to direct and coordinate the district's library media program.

3. Make available to all pupils a current, balanced collection of books, basic reference materials, texts, periodicals, and audiovisual materials which depicts in an accurate and unbiased way the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.

4. Provide library media services to all pupils as follows: to pupils in grades kindergarten through 6, library media services which are performed by or under the direction of licensed library and audiovisual personnel; and to pupils in grades 7 through 12, library media services which are performed by licensed library and audiovisual personnel.

Standard (i): Safe and Healthful Facilities

Statute: Provide safe and healthful facilities.

Rule: A long-range plan shall be developed, adopted, and recorded by the school board which defines the patterns and schedule for bringing the district operated facilities to the level of the standards established for safe and healthful facilities. The school board shall comply with all regulations, state codes, and orders of the department of industry, labor and human relations and the department of health and social services and all applicable local safety and health codes and regulations. The facilities shall be inspected at least annually for potential or demonstrated hazards to safety and health, and hazardous conditions shall be corrected, compensating devices installed or special arrangements made to provide for safe and healthful facilities. Maintenance procedures and custodial services shall be conducted in such a manner that the safety and health of persons using the facilities are protected. Responsibility for coordinating all activities related to the safety and health considerations of the facilities for the entire district shall be assigned to one individual.

Standard (j): Health, Physical Education, Art, and Music

Statute: Ensure that instruction in elementary and high schools in health, physical education, art and music, is provided by qualified teachers.

Rule: The school district board shall provide instruction in health, physical education, art and music as follows:

1. Health instruction shall be provided in accordance with a written comprehensive health education curriculum which includes the curricular areas defined in ss. 115.35 and 118.01(2), Stats. A professional staff member shall be designated as coordinator of health education. Health education in grades kindergarten through 6 shall be under the direction of a licensed health teacher. In grades 7 through 12 health education shall be conducted by or under the direction of a licensed health teacher and shall include one structured course in health taught by a licensed health teacher.

2. Physical education instruction shall be provided in accordance with a developmental, sequential, comprehensive physical education curriculum and program of instruction for all pupils. Instruction in grades kindergarten through 6 shall be provided at least 3 times weekly, except that days on which special activities are conducted may be exempt; and shall be conducted by or under the direction of a licensed physical education teacher. Pupils in grade 6 may be scheduled in accordance with the criteria for scheduling grades 7 through 12 if the pupils are attending a school that includes any of those grades. All pupils in grades 7 through 12 shall participate in the instructional program of physical education taught by a licensed physical education teacher, except that in senior high schools one year or the equivalent may be optional to students.

3. Art instruction shall be provided in accordance with a written comprehensive art curriculum which is based on concepts developed through sensory awareness, aesthetic discrimination and skill development in the creation of art and the knowledge of human art heritage. Art instruction shall be provided for all pupils in grades kindergarten through 6 and shall be performed by or under the direction of a licensed art teacher. Art instruction shall be available to all pupils in grades 7 through 12 and shall be taught by a licensed art teacher.

4. Music instruction shall be provided in accordance with a written comprehensive music curriculum including developmental experiences involving singing, playing instruments, listening, movement, creative expression and music reading. Music instruction shall be provided for all pupils in grades kindergarten through 6 and shall be performed by or under the direction of a licensed music teacher. Music instruction including general music, vocal music and instrumental music shall be available to all pupils in grades 7 through 12 and shall be taught by a licensed music teacher.

Standard (k): Curriculum Plan

Statute: 1. By September 1, 1988, develop a written, sequential curriculum plan in at least 3 of the following subject areas: reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, health, computer literacy, environmental education, vocational education, physical education, art and music. The plan shall specify objectives, course content and resources and shall include a program evaluation method.

2. By September 1, 1989, develop a written, sequential curriculum plan in at least 3 additional subject areas specified in subd. 1.

3. By September 1, 1990, develop a written, sequential curriculum plan in all of the remaining subject areas specified in subd. 1.

Rule: 1. In this paragraph:

a. "Computer literacy" means the ability to use computer programs to assist learning, handling information and problem solving, and the ability to make informed judgments concerning social and ethical issues involving computers and information systems.

b. "School district curriculum plan" means the composite of the sequential curriculum plans.

c. "Sequential curriculum plan" means an organized set of learning experiences that build upon previously acquired knowledge and skills.

2. Each school district board shall develop, adopt and implement a written school district curriculum plan which includes the following:

a. A kindergarten through grade 12 sequential curriculum plan in each of the following subject areas: reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, health, computer literacy, environmental education, physical education, art and music.

b. A grade 7 through 12 sequential curriculum plan in vocational education.

3. Each sequential curriculum plan shall specify objectives, course sequence, course content, resources and an allocation of instructional time by week, semester and school term. The school district board shall establish in the school district curriculum plan the allocation of instructional time, by week, semester and school term, among all subject areas.

4. Each sequential curriculum plan shall include a program evaluation method which provides a systematic, continuous and objective process of determining whether pupils attain the specified objectives. Components of the sequential curriculum plan shall be monitored continuously and the overall program evaluation method shall be reviewed at least once every 5 years and revised as appropriate to ensure that pupils meet the curriculum objectives.

5. The school district curriculum plan shall be consistent with the approved education for employment program under ch. PI 26.

6. The school district board shall develop sequential curriculum plans in at least 3 of the subject areas specified in subd. 2 by September 1, 1988; in at least 3 more of the subject areas specified in subd. 2 by September 1, 1989; and in all of the remaining subject areas specified in subd. 2 by September 1, 1990. The computer literacy and environmental education curriculum plans shall be developed as follows:

a. Computer literacy objectives and activities shall be integrated into the kindergarten through grade 12 sequential curriculum plans.

b. Environmental education objectives and activities shall be integrated into the kindergarten through grade 12 sequential curriculum plans, with the greatest emphasis in art, health, science and social studies education.

Standard (L): Regular Instruction

Statute: 1. In the elementary grades, provide regular instruction in reading, language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health, physical education, art and music.

2. In grades 5 to 8, provide regular instruction in language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health, physical education, art and music. The school board shall also provide pupils with an introduction to career exploration and planning.

3. In grades 9 to 12, provide access to an educational program that enables pupils each year to study English, social studies, mathematics, science, vocational education, foreign language, physical education, art and music. In this subdivision, "access" means an opportunity to study through school district course offerings, independent study, cooperative educational service agencies or cooperative arrangements between school boards and postsecondary educational institutions.

Rule: Each school district board shall provide instruction as follows:

1. In grades kindergarten through 4, regular instruction shall be provided in reading, language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health, physical education, art and music. In this subdivision, "regular instruction" means instruction each week for the entire school term in sufficient frequency and length to achieve the objectives and allocation of instructional time identified in the curriculum plans developed and adopted under par. (k).

Note: Appendix A to this chapter contains the department's recommendations for minimum allocations of instruction for grades kindergarten through grade 6.

2. In grades 5 through 8, regular instruction shall be provided in reading, language arts, social

studies, mathematics, science, physical education, health, art and music. In this subdivision, "regular instruction" means instruction each week for the entire school term in sufficient frequency and length to achieve the objectives and allocation of instructional time identified in the curriculum plans developed and adopted under par. (k), except that in middle level formats which offer or require a variety of exploratory experiences for pupils, such as foreign language, business education, vocational agriculture, technology education, home economics education and marketing education, regular instruction in health, art and general music may be provided as follows:

a. In grades 5 and 6, each week for the entire school term, or the equivalent in instructional time and course content, and in sufficient frequency and length to achieve the objectives and allocation of instructional time identified in the curriculum plan developed and adopted under par. (k).

b. In grades 7 and 8, in sufficient frequency and length to achieve the objectives and allocation of instructional time identified in the curriculum plans developed and adopted under par. (k).

3. An introduction to career exploration and planning, through a one semester course or the equivalent in instructional time and course content, shall be integrated within grades 5 through 8.

4. In grades 9 through 12, access shall be provided without charge for tuition, to an educational program which enables pupils each year to study English, social studies, mathematics, science, vocational education, foreign language, physical education, art and music. The school district board shall make all courses as widely available to all pupils as possible, however an individual pupil's scheduling conflict does not constitute denial of access to a course.

Standard (m): Education for Employment

Statute: Provide access to an education for employment program that has been approved by the state superintendent.

Rule: Each school district board shall comply with s. 121.01(1)(m), Stats., and ch. PI 26, relating to education for employment.

Standard (n): Children at Risk

Statute: Develop a plan for children at risk under s. 118.153.

Rule: Each school district board shall comply with s. 118.153, Stats., and ch. PI 25, relating to plans and programs for children at risk.

Standard (o): Annual Performance Disclosure Report

Statute: Annually, adopt and publish a performance disclosure report. The report shall describe the school board's and each school's educational goals and objectives, including learning-related performance objectives, and the results of the tests administered under par. (s) during the previous school year.

Rule: Each school district board shall annually adopt and publish a report to the residents of the school district. The report shall be written in plain language and shall include the following:

1. A statement of the educational goals and objectives of the school district, including performance objectives related to learning and the progress made in meeting the objectives.

2. A statement of the educational goals and objectives for each school in the school district, including performance objectives related to learning and the progress made in meeting the objectives.

3. Results of achievement tests administered under par. (s) or under s. 118.30, Stats., for the school district and for each school in the school district.

Standard (p): High School Graduation Standards

Statute: Comply with high school graduation standards under s. 118.33(1).

Rule: Each school district board shall comply with s. 118.33, Stats., and ch. PI 18, relating to high school graduation standards.

Standard (q): Personnel Evaluation

Statute: Evaluate, in writing, the performance of all certified school personnel at the end of their first year and at least every 3rd year thereafter.

Rule: 1. Each school district board shall establish specific criteria and a systematic procedure to measure the performance of licensed school personnel. The written evaluation shall be based on a board adopted position description, including job related activities, and shall include observation of

the individual's performance as part of the evaluation data. Evaluation of licensed school personnel shall occur during the first year of employment and at least every third year thereafter.

2. The school district board shall ensure that evaluations, including those for purposes of discipline, job retention or promotion, shall be performed by persons who have the training, knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate professional school personnel. The school district board shall be responsible for the evaluation of the school district administrator under this subdivision.

Standard (r): Third Grade Reading Tests

Statute: Annually administer a standardized reading test developed by the department to all pupils enrolled in the school district in grade 3.

Rule: 1. The department shall develop a standardized reading test for pupils in grade 3. The department shall annually provide the test to all school district boards and score and report the results. Each school district board shall annually administer the test to all pupils in the school district enrolled in grade 3. Standardized refers to test objectives and items, test related materials, test administration procedures, the testing schedule, and the scoring and reporting procedures and formats. The department shall provide guidelines to assist school districts in testing and excluding from testing pupils with special needs, including pupils with exceptional educational needs under ch. 115, subch. V., Stats., and pupils with limited English proficiency under ch. 115, subch. VII, Stats.

2. The department shall report each school district's test results, for the school district and for each school in the district, to the school district board.

3. The department shall report aggregate statewide pupil achievement data to each school district for the purpose of local evaluation of school district test performance in relation to statewide performance.

4. The department shall establish achievement performance standards and shall report the achievement level to each school district board in relation to the standards.

Standard (s): Achievement Tests

Statute: Using achievement tests that are aligned with the school district's curriculum, test all of the pupils enrolled in the school district in reading, language arts and mathematics at least twice in grades kindergarten to 5, at least once in grades 6 to 8 and at least once in grades 9 to 11. This paragraph does not apply to any school district participating in the competency testing program under s. 118.30.

Rule: Each school district board shall test all of the pupils enrolled in the school district in reading, language arts and mathematics at least twice in grades kindergarten through 5, at least once in grades 6 through 8, and at least once in grades 9 through 11. The school district board shall use achievement tests that are aligned with the school district's curriculum and which measure pupil achievement in relation to curriculum objectives identified under par. (k). The department shall provide guidelines to assist school districts in testing and excluding from testing pupils with special needs, including pupils with exceptional educational needs under ch. 115, subch. V., Stats., and students with limited English proficiency under ch. 115, subch. VII, Stats. A school district's participation in the competency testing program under s. 118.30, Stats., meets the requirement of this paragraph.

Standard (t): Gifted and Talented Pupils

Statute: Provide access to an appropriate program for pupils identified as gifted and talented.

Rule: 1. In this paragraph:

a. "Appropriate program" means a systematic and continuous set of instructional activities or learning experiences which expand the development of the pupils identified as gifted or talented.

b. "Gifted and talented pupils" has the meaning set forth in s. 118.35(1), Stats.

2. Each school district board shall establish a means for identifying gifted and talented pupils in each of the categories identified in s. 118.35(1), Stats. Multiple criteria for the identification of gifted or talented pupils shall be used including intelligence, achievement, leadership, creativity, product evaluations, and nominations. A pupil may be identified as gifted or talented in one or more of the categories under s. 118.35(1), Stats. The school district board shall provide access, without charge for tuition, to appropriate programs for pupils identified as gifted or talented as required under ss. 118.35(3) and 121.02(1)(t),

Stats. The school district board shall provide an opportunity for parental participation in the planning of the proposed program.

Statutes and Rules for Standard Compliance

Wisconsin Statute 121.02(2)

In order to ensure compliance with the standards under sub.(1), the state superintendent shall annually conduct a general on-site audit of at least 20% of all school districts, selected by means of a stratified, random sample. The state superintendent shall audit each school district at least once every 5 years but may not audit a school district more than once every 3 years. The state superintendent shall ensure that the audit process involves school board members, school district administrators, teachers, pupils, parents of pupils and other residents of the school district. Nothing in this subsection prohibits the state superintendent from conducting an inquiry into compliance with the standards upon receipt of a complaint.

PI 8.02 Compliance Audits

(1) Beginning in the 1988-89 school year, the department shall annually conduct a general on-site audit of at least 20% of all school districts, as required under s. 121.02(2), Stats., selected by means of a stratified random sample. In this section, "selected by means of a stratified random sample" means that districts will be grouped according to enrollment and a representative number will be selected randomly from each group. The state superintendent shall audit each school district at least once every 5 years but may not audit a school district more than once every 3years. Nothing in this section prohibits the statesuperintendent from conducting an inquiry into compliance with the standards upon receipt of a complaint.

(2) The department shall notify the school district board at least 90 days prior to the beginning of the on-site audit.

(3) The department shall provide a report to the school district board in writing within 60 days of the end of the on-site visit. If the report indicates that the district is not in compliance with s. 121.02(1), Stats., or s. PI 8.01(2), the school district board or the electors of the school district as provided under s. 121.02(3), Stats., may petition the state superintendent for a public hearing within 45 days of receipt of the audit report. The state superintendent shall hold the public hearing prior to any finding of noncompliance.

PI 8.001 Definitions

In this chapter:

(1) "Access" means an opportunity to study through school district course offerings, independent study, cooperative educational service agencies, or cooperative arrangements between school district boards under s. 66.30, Stats., and postsecondary education institutions.

(2) "Career exploration and planning" means the process by which elementary and secondary pupils identify and evaluate life and work choices, explore and plan career goals, and acquire realistic life and work decision-making skills.

(3) "Children at risk" has the meaning set forth in s. 118.153(1)(a), Stats.

(4) "Days" means calendar days unless otherwise specified.

(5) "Department" means the Wisconsin department of public instruction.

(5m) "Direction" includes planning, cousultation, inservice training and periodic review.

(6) "Hours" means clock hours.

(7) "Kindergarten" means 5-year old kindergarten unless otherwise specified.

(8) "Licensed" means holding a valid license issued by the department as required under ss. 118.19 and 121.02(1)(a), Stats.

(8m) "Middle level format" means an organizational pattern which includes part or all of grades 5 to 9.

(9) "Postsecondary education institutions" means public and private colleges and universities, and vocational and technical institutions and schools.

(10) "School district board" means the school board in charge of the schools of a public school district.

(11) "School term" has the meaning set forth in s. 115.001(12), Stats.

(12) "State superintendent" means the state superintendent of public instruction.

(13) "Vocational education" means instructional programs designed to assist pupils in achieving mastery of the skills set forth in s. 118.01(2)(b), Stats.

School Improvement Needs-Assessment Survey

I. Clear School Mission	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5
A. School/districtwide* unity exists toward the mission of the school/district.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. Goals relating to the mission are clearly stated in writing and were developed from broad participatory involvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. Goals relating to the mission are regularly monitored, evaluated, and updated to maintain current relevance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. The school/district goals are reviewed annually with new school board and staff members to maintain current relevance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. Teachers, students, and administrators are provided with the necessary human and physical resources to carry out their mission responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F. Written sequential objectives have been developed in all content areas.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G. Students spend five hours per week on homework assignments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
II. Strong Instructional Leadership					
A. There is clear, strong instructional leadership from the principal/central office in this district/school; staff members know what is expected, where they're going, and how to get there.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. The principal/central office regularly involves the staff regarding instructional issues, programs, and new developments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. The principal/central office has established a clear, fair, and consistent policy regarding all facets of the instructional program and personnel functions aimed at development and resolution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. The principal/central office uses test results to recommend change and modification to the instructional program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. The principal/central office is sensitive to and supportive of staff needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

** Where the term school/district is used, cross out the part that does not apply (i.e., if the survey is for a school, cross out district and vice versa). Do the same for principal/central office.*

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
F. The principal/central office has formal observation, evaluation, and follow-up procedures for rating and improving teacher performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G. The principal/central office requires and regularly reviews lesson plans to evaluate their quality and relevance to the district goals, mission, and curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
H. The principal/central office encourages and provides the opportunity for staff development (workshops, conferences, release time).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I. The principal/central office exhibits and encourages leadership that is in tune with current thinking and fosters creative involvement in the instructional programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
J. The principal/central office encourages collaborative rather than directed leadership and involvement .	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
III. School Learning Climate					
A. School administrators and staff work together in the decision-making process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. School administrators and staff hold high expectations for student behavior; students are aware of these standards and know they will be held accountable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. School administrators and staff hold high expectations for student achievement; students are aware of and understand these expectations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. Emphasis is placed on student time on task. Classroom interruptions are held to an absolute minimum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. School personnel, students, and community members take pride in their school and its appearance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F. Teachers and students show respect for each other and enthusiasm for learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G. Students are expected to master their subject matter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IV. Opportunity to Learn and Academic Engaged Time					
A. The school/district has a written policy and procedure relating to pupil attendance, truancy, and tardiness that is uniformly administered.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. Efforts are always sought to increase available time for instruction through more efficient time scheduling.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
C. Classroom interruptions are discouraged and kept to an absolute minimum for management procedures such as intercom messages, unnecessary moving about, and tardinesses.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. Planned use of instructional aides, volunteers, and tutors is designed to increase instructional time on task.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. There has been a fairly recent attempt to assess how time is wasted and how engaged time can be effectively increased.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
V. High Pupil Expectations					
A. Teachers and administrators believe that all students—regardless of their social and economic background—can master subject matters at the competency levels established as the district standard.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. Teachers in the school/district hold consistently high expectations for all students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. Ninety-five percent or more of the students in this school/district can be expected to complete high school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. Students understand the high achievement expectations and react positively to that circumstance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. This school/district encourages heterogeneous grouping and seldom separates students on the basis of ability or handicapping condition.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F. The number of students from low-income families retained in a grade is proportionately the same as that of students from other income categories.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
G. There is a consistent pattern in this school/district that is evident from teacher to teacher as it relates to goals, mission, and high achievement expectations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
H. Teacher lessons and classroom presentations are varied and take into consideration the individual differences of students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I. Student achievement is monitored regularly through appropriate test and measurement techniques.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
J. Parents are informed of and involved in the high achievement standards of the school/district.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
VI. Monitoring of Pupil Progress					
A. In addition to report cards, the school/district has established regular procedures for notifying parents and students of student progress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. The school/district uses a standardized testing program to measure school/district progress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. The standardized tests match the curriculum of the school/district.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. The school/district uses the standardized test results to publicize and improve programs and performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. All staff members are provided test results and an appropriate interpretation of their meaning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F. The principal, staff, and central office personnel use tests and other assessment techniques as the basis for instituting change in curriculum and program thrust.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
VII. Parent and Community Involvement					
A. The school/district encourages parent/community involvement through active committee assignments in broad areas of program/policy activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. The school/district has a wide range of activities available for parents to participate in.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. The school/district has a systematic procedure established to ensure that the affairs of the school/district are properly communicated to the parents and community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. Parents and members of the community are used as volunteer aids and tutors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. The community is considered and used as an educational resource in school/district programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
F. Parents and community members are proud of their schools and support them at an appropriate level.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

School Improvement Program Profile

School Name: _____ Telephone No.: _____

Address: _____

_____

Name of Person(s) Who Completed This Form: _____ _____

_____ _____

Section I. School Characteristics

A. What grades are included in your school and how many students are enrolled at each level?

K _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____ 11 _____ 12 _____

Total _____

How many students are enrolled in your school district? _____ In general, how would you classify the district? ☐ Rural ☐ Suburban ☐ Urban

B. Please indicate the number of staff in each of the following areas:

	Full time	Part time
Administrators	_____	_____
Teachers	_____	_____
Teacher aides	_____	_____
Counselors	_____	_____
Library and other media professionals	_____	_____
Social workers	_____	_____
Food service personnel	_____	_____
Clerical	_____	_____

Have there been any significant changes in any of these numbers in the last three years?

_____

C. How long has the principal been in his or her position? _____

Section II. Elements of School Improvement

A. Clear School Mission and Accompanying Instructional Program

1. How are teachers organized for planning and instruction (for instance, by department or by teams)?

2. Does your school have an overall set of instructional goals? If so, please list or describe them briefly. How were they established? How are they communicated to students? Parents? Teachers?

3. Does your school have any ongoing staff development activities? If so, please describe them and discuss how they are planned.

4. Does your school have regular procedures for internal review of curriculum and instruction? If so, please describe them and indicate when the most recent reviews were completed.

5. Does your school have any programs that provide remediation in the basic skill areas? If so, please describe them briefly and indicate how students are assigned to them.

6. To what extent do teachers follow a complete cycle of teaching for each objective: diagnosing need, prescribing instruction, setting objectives that all can master, explaining the lesson, instructing, giving students enough time, monitoring their work, giving them specific feedback and praise, and reporting outcomes? Please explain your answer.

7. To what extent does the school's testing or assessment program accurately measure the written curriculum and what the teachers are teaching? Please explain your answer.

8. When does foreign language study begin in your school and how long does it continue?

9. Summarize your school's textbook and learning materials acquisition policy (specify cycle, evaluation procedures, and appropriateness considerations).

10. Describe any programs your school has for gifted and talented students.

11. Describe any programs your school has for socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

12. Describe any programs your school has for minority students.

13. Describe any programs your school has for English as a Second Language.

14. Are there ample learning materials, supplies, and equipment? If not, please explain.

15. Describe the process or procedures your school uses in discussing, planning, or resolving curricular and testing issues with other schools in your district on a K-12 basis.

16. How is your school's testing program linked to programs of remediation and opportunities for enrichment or accelerated work?

17. When is science introduced in your school?

18. Are there provisions in your school for extended contracts for teachers for planning and/or curriculum related work? Please explain.

19. Does your school have a "school improvement fund" with some discretionary money to provide time and materials for program development, special seminars, and staff retreats?

B. Strong Instructional Leadership

1. To what extent do school leaders provide teachers with clear guidelines for how much time they should devote to each subject?

2. Does your school have formal procedures for evaluating teachers? If so, please describe them. Are there specific feedback mechanisms? Are there opportunities for recognizing excellence in teaching?

3. To what extent does the principal (vice principal or department head) make regular visits to the classrooms? When there, does he or she systematically observe the teachers' instructional methods and constructively help the teachers improve their effectiveness?

4. What are the lesson plan requirements for all teachers?

5. In faculty meetings, what percentage of the time is devoted to instructional improvement?

6. Who is responsible for coordination of the school improvement program within and between grades? If several persons are involved, please state appropriate time commitments or percentages?

7. How are time allotments for subject areas determined?

8. Describe the procedures your school has, if any, for administrative review of grades or studies of grading pattern.

9. To what extent are scarce monetary and teaching resources allocated according to predetermined priorities?

C. School Learning Climate

1. What opportunities exist for student participation in school government?

2. How does your school provide for the orientation of new students?

3. During the last school year, how many of the following occurred in your school?

   Student expulsions _____

   Student suspensions _____

   Assaults on students _____

   Assaults on teachers _____

   Reported incidents of vandalism _____

   Has this pattern been consistent over the past three years? If not, what changes have occurred? Why?

4. In your school, are there opportunities for student competition or recognition in any of the core curriculum areas? If so, please indicate the areas in which students from your school participated and what recognition they received?

5. Please list any awards or honors students have received that you consider to be particularly good indicators of the quality of your school.

6. Please list any awards to your school or any of its programs in the last three years.

7. Does your school have a written disciplinary policy? Is the policy known and understood by teachers, parents, and students?

8. Does your school have alternative classrooms and/or programs for continually disruptive students?

9. Are there facility problems that significantly affect the quality of the instructional program? If so, please explain.

10. Does your school regularly honor, recognize, or reward outstanding student performance? Please explain.

D. Opportunity to Learn and Academic Engaged Time

1. What was the student drop-out rate during the last school year? Has this pattern been fairly consistent over the last three years? If not, how has it changed and why?

2. On the average, what percentage of the students attend school each day? _____% Teachers? _____% Have either of these rates changed significantly during the last three years? If so, please explain why.

3. Does your school have a written attendance policy with clear incentives and sanctions?

4. How many hours or minutes per week are devoted to required coursework in:

Subject	Grades *(Insert hours or minutes in boxes for grades that apply)*											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Reading												
Mathematics												
Science												
Social Studies												
English												
Spelling												
Language Arts												
Writing												
Foreign Language												

5. How many hours or minutes per week are devoted to homework in:

Subject	Grades *(Insert hours or minutes in boxes for grades that apply)*											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Reading												
Mathematics												
Science												
Social Studies												
English												
Spelling												
Language Arts												
Writing												
Foreign Language												

6. Is your school's homework policy strictly enforced?

7. What is the length of your school day excluding lunch periods and recess?

8. What is the length of your school year?

9. Has your school increased learning time by establishing a wide range of learning opportunities beyond the normal school day and year? Please explain.

10. Does your school formally introduce and/or instruct students concerning effective study and work skills?

E. High Pupil Expectations

1. In the chart below, please indicate the minimum requirements for English, mathematics, social studies, science, foreign language, and computer science.

	No Minimum Requirement	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years
English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social studies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Foreign language	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Computer science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. To what extent are the school's goals and expected standards of achievement clearly explained to students?

3. Of the students who graduated last year, approximately what percentage

- enrolled in a four–year college or university _____ %
- enrolled in a community college _____ %
- enrolled in vocational training _____ %
- found full-time employment _____ %
- found part-time employment _____ %
- enlisted in the military _____ %

Have any of these rates changed by more than 10 percent in the last three years? If so, please describe the changes and indicate why they occurred.

Of those students who went on to some form of postsecondary education, how many received scholarships?

4. Explain your school's procedure(s) for advising both parents and students on course selection and the consequences of such selection. Please explain.

F. Monitoring of Pupil Progress

1. Other than report cards, does your school have any regular procedures for notifying students and parents of student progress in coursework? If so, please explain.

2. Aside from regular evaluation of student performance in classes, does your school have formal procedures for measuring student achievement? If so, please describe them, and, in a format appropriate for your school, indicate the results from the last three evaluation periods?

3. To what extent is placing, grouping, and promotion of students guided by academic progress or mastery rather than rigid adherence to age?

4. Explain how your school uses test results.

5. Has your school's formal testing program changed in the past ten years? If so, explain the reasons for the change(s).

6. Explain how your school's formal test results are communicated to teachers, parents, board of education members, and the public.

G. Parent/Community Involvement

1. What opportunities exist for student participation in community-based programs?

2. Does your school have any partnerships for improving your program with business, industry, or other professions? Please explain.

3. Does your school have an active parents' organization? Please explain.

4. Does your school have a handbook for parents? Describe its contents.

5. Do parents receive timely information from the school and school board? Please explain.

6. Does your school encourage constructive citizen participation in establishing school policies, priorities, and curriculum? Please explain.

Resource Highlights for Effective Schools

Effective-schools research forms the basis for many of today's ongoing school improvement programs. Wisconsin's definition of school improvement—as discussed in Section 1 of this publication—is based on this research. The purpose of this appendix is to summarize some of the characteristics that were examined in developing the Wisconsin definition. Further detail can be found by referring to the citations in the bibliography at the end of Section 4.

In the following section, the bulleted items are characteristics that are described in the indicated source.

Alaska State Board Of Education (1982)

Primary Conditions

- There is a warm, accepting climate in the school and the classroom, in which students are valued and respected.
- Students are regarded as being able to achieve and to learn, and they receive positive encouragement to do so. Each student is challenged and expected to develop to the fullest of his or her capacity.
- Feedback to students is prompted as a means of reinforcing desired behaviors and as a means of minimizing student errors. The student is rewarded for good behavior, serious classroom effort, and achievement.
- Skills learned in one subject are applied in other subject areas. Spelling, for example, is incorporated into other work; mathematics is used in science.
- Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled, and sufficient time is provided for the conferences.
- There is a minimum of student waiting time between the completion of one task and the beginning of the next.
- Understanding and respect for various cultures are demonstrated by students and educators.
- Instruction contains a strong emphasis on applying knowledge to real-life problems.
- The content of instruction is well defined and balanced on a grade-by-grade or year-by-year basis.
- Instruction is based upon information in the student record system, which contains complete records identifying portions of the curriculum that each student has mastered.
- There is a positive system of staff evaluation in which it is assumed that teachers are proficient when employed and that even the best teacher can improve. Emphasis is upon continuous professional growth and improvement of instruction.
- Staff inservice training is directly related to assisting teachers and other staff in providing for effective schooling.
- The school staff makes a determined effort to communicate effectively with parents or guardians and utilizes parent and community resources in the instructional program.
- Strengths and weaknesses of the school are determined and reported to the community.
- Facilities and staff are provided which support the curriculum and school programs.
- Instruction is well managed and school resources are effectively and efficiently administered.
- Discipline is maintained and students are expected to assume responsibility for their own behavior. Disruptive student behavior is approached from the perspective of changing the behavior so the student can stay in the school if possible.
- District policies are supportive of effective schooling.

Indirect Conditions

- Citizens regard schooling as being important and effective.
- Appropriate research and assessment instruments are available for evaluating the effectiveness of schooling.
- There are teacher training programs which provide talented and effective teachers.
- Adequate funding is provided to meet both general operating and capital needs.
- State board of education policies and regulations, as well as department of education practices, are supportive of effective schooling.
- Students are reasonably healthy and have adequate nutrition.

- Students see themselves as being loved and accepted by parents or guardians, peers, and significant others apart from school.
- The parents or guardians of students encourage daily study and daily attendance.
- Teachers and other staff are afforded the needed amenities, including housing, that enables them to provide effective instruction.

Edmonds (1982)

- The principal demonstrates leadership and attention to the quality of instruction.
- The school has a persuasive and broadly understood instructional focus.
- The school has an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning.
- Teachers' behaviors convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery.
- The use of measures of pupil achievement is the basis for program evaluation.

Gauthier (1983)

- Safe and orderly environment
- Strong instructional leadership
- High expectations
- Clear school mission
- Opportunities to learn and time on task
- Frequent monitoring of pupil progress
- Parent and community involvement

Lezotte (1982)

- The principal demonstrates strong administrative and instructional leadership.
- There is a climate of expectation in which no child is permitted to fall below a minimum standard.
- The school's climate is orderly without being rigid.
- The acquisition of basic skills takes precedence over all other school activities.
- The school's energy and other resources can be diverted from other business to the continuation of these objectives as needed.
- There is some way to frequently monitor pupil progress.

The National Institute of Education (1985)

- Clear academic and behavioral goals
- Order and discipline
- High expectations for students
- Teacher efficacy
- Rewards and incentives for teachers and students
- Positive school environment
- Administrative leadership
- Community support
- Concentration on academic learning time
- Frequent and monitored homework
- Regular and frequent monitoring of student progress
- Well-coordinated curriculum
- Variety of teaching strategies
- Opportunities for student responsibility

Purkey and Smith (1983)

Organization-Structure Variables

- School-site management
- Instructional leadership
- Staff stability
- Curriculum articulation and organization
- Schoolwide staff development
- Parental involvement and support
- Schoolwide recognition and academic success
- Maximized learning time
- District support

Process Variables

- Collaborative planning and postsecondary relationships
- Sense of community
- Clear goals and high expectations commonly shared
- Order and discipline